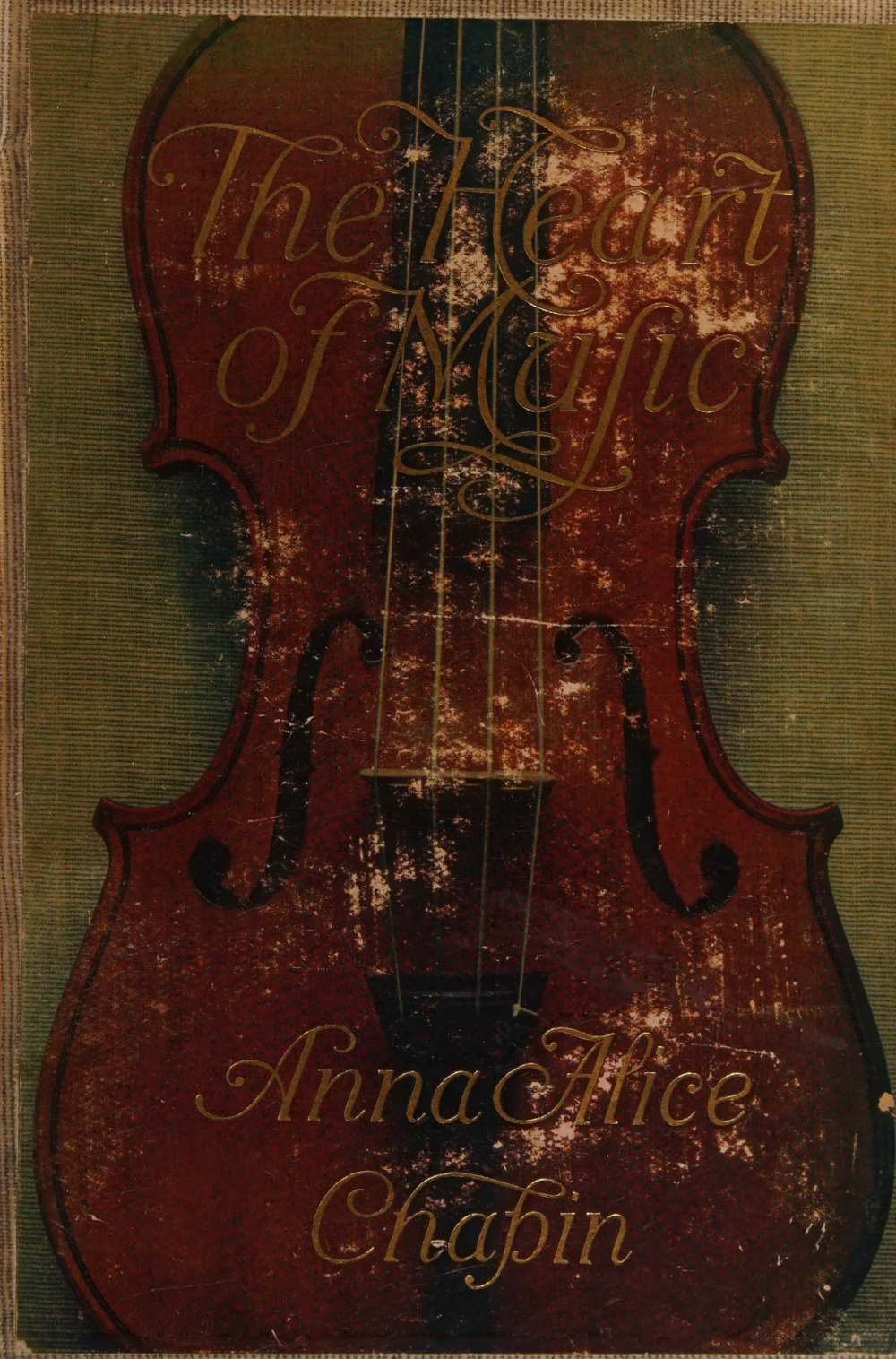
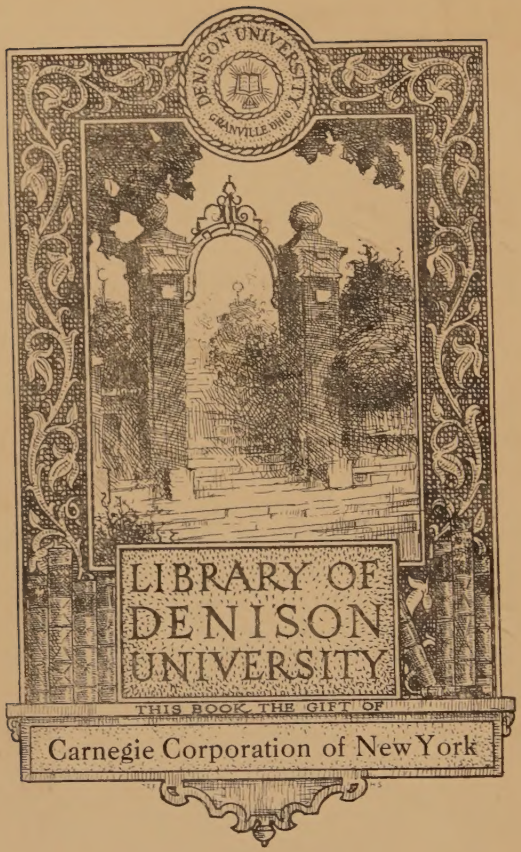

The Heart of Music
Anna Alice Chapin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WITHDRAWN

THE HEART OF MUSIC

"Now . . . my stringed instruments come in. These to the left of the orchestra break into a soft slow movement, the music swaying drowsily, from side to side as it were, with a noise like the rustling of boughs. It must not be much, however, for my stringed instruments to the right have begun the very song of the morning. The bows tremble upon the strings, like the limbs of a dancer, who, a-tip-toe, prepares to bound into her ecstacy of motion. Away! The song soars into the air as if it had the wings of a kite; here swooping, there swooping, wheeling upward, falling suddenly, checked, poised for a moment on quivering wings, and again away. It is waltz time, and you hear the hours dancing to it!" — *William Makepeace Thackeray.*

The Master
STRADIVARIUS

THE

HEART OF MUSIC

70141

THE STORY OF THE VIOLIN

BY

ANNA ALICE CHAPIN

AUTHOR OF "MASTERS OF MUSIC,"
"MAKERS OF SONG," ETC.

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DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1906

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To

HARRY ROWE SHELLEY

WITH WARMEST GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION
FROM HIS FRIEND AND PUPIL
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

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PRELUDE

"Into the town will I, my frendes to vysit there,
And hither straight again to see th' end of this yere;
In the meantime, fellowes, pype up your fiddles, I say, take them,
And let your frendes here have such mirth as ye can make them."

T. Colwell, 1575.

OF necessity a history of the violin must be a history, first and foremost, of everything except the violin. The violin has no history. When Stradivari made the Perfect Fiddle its history was begun and ended in one breath. One could write elaborate stories of Paganini's "Cannon" and Sarasati's "Boissièr," but this would be a history of violins and violinists, not of the violin.

The writer, in deep love of the greatest of all instruments and a desire to trace its origin to its most remote sources, has found herself traversing very circuitous paths, and consorting with a mixed company of instruments, — all ancestors of the fiddle, undoubtedly, but bearing little more than a family resemblance to the beautiful thing the evolution of which she had begun to investigate. She can only express the hope that her readers will find some small tenth of the delight which came to her, in her voyages in search of the

ancestry of the instrument beloved by the whole world. She wishes to deny any claim to having done her task other than in the most superficial manner. The student will readily see the possibilities of research and information which the author passed resolutely by. Her effort was to make for herself a rude genealogy of the violin, —the briefest and simplest résumé of the history of stringed instruments leading up to the perfect fiddle. More than this she has made no attempt to accomplish. Into the hands of those as violin mad as herself she commends her work, with neither protestation, pretension, nor excuse.

One's most impassioned study of the art of violin-making receives a jolt by reading this paragraph in "Knight's Dictionary":

"Locusts are fiddlers. Their hind legs are the bars, and the projecting veins of their wing-covers the strings. On each side of the body is the first segment of the abdomen. Just above and a little behind the thighs is a deep cavity, closed by a thin piece of skin stretched tightly across it like a banjo cover. When a locust begins to play he bends the shank of one hind leg beneath the thigh, and then draws the leg briskly up and down several times against the projecting lateral edge and veins of the wing-cover."

Of what avail to spend four thousand years in evolving an instrument that a grasshopper carries about with him, and can perform upon simply by "bending the shank of one hind leg?"

"Le lutherie," says a good abbé of old, "n'est pas seulment un mêtier, c'est un art." But above all it *is* a "mêtier,"—a vocation, a gift.

Violin-making has been taught ever since there were violin makers, but as a matter of fact it can never really be taught. It must come as naturally as it does to the grasshopper. It is one of the spontaneous talents of the world,—like poetry, or cooking, or making love.

That is why so much of this work is concerned with stringed music, which has nothing to do with science, or calculation, or accuracy, as people estimate it, but has bubbled up, after the fashion of springs, folk-songs, and passion, among peoples of various races, since time began. In great numbers of old books you may find the Brain of Music, but that requires three-thirds of a lifetime of study. It is much easier and more satisfactory to find the Heart.

In the Beginning

THUS rose a song — the harmony of times
Before the winds blew Europe o'er these climes.
True they had vices — such are Nature's growth —
But only the barbarian's — we have both:
The sordor of civilisation, mix'd
With all the savage which man's fall hath fix'd.

. . . . . .

Such was this ditty of Tradition's days,
Which to the dead a lingering fame conveys
In song, where fame as yet hath left no sign
Beyond the sound whose charm is half divine;
Which leaves no record to the sceptic eye,
But yields young history all to harmony;
A boy Achilles with the centaur's lyre
In hand, to teach him to surpass his sire.
For one long-cherished ballad's simple stave,
Rung from the rock, or mingled with the wave,
Or from the bubbling streamlet's grassy side,
Or gathering mountain echoes as they glide,
Hath greater power o'er each true heart and ear,
Than all the columns Conquest's minions rear;
Invites, when hieroglyphics are a theme
For sage's labours or the student's dream;
Attracts, when History's volumes are a toil, —
The first, the freshest bud of Feeling's soil.
Such was this rude rhyme —
. . . Such, wherever rise
Lands which no foes destroy or civilise,
Exist; And what can our accomplish'd art
Of verse do more than reach the awaken'd heart?

BYRON.

The Heart of Music

I.—In the Beginning

SOMEWHERE, in the beginning of things, some primitive man, as yet half beast, striving cumbrously toward his heritage of immortality, found that certain sounds fell kindly on the ears, and went about the business of creating them for his own pleasure. Somewhere, in the beginning of things, he blew through a pierced shell, or beat one stone on another, and listened, and was pleased, and tried again because he was pleased. Somewhere, in the beginning of things, he stretched a bear's sinew from end to end of a bent stick. That was a bow, and he made rude arrows, and used the two in combination to kill things, that he afterwards ate in unbecoming ravenousness; also as a method of disposing of persons he did not like.

Finally, one day, doubtless to attract the attention of one of his gods,—for he was on intimate, if terrified, terms with the deities,—he twanged the string of the bow. The sound pleased him, whether or not it met the satisfaction of the god, and he used to sit and twang until

the very rocks and heavens must have grown weary of hearing.

And from that crude and remote parentage, — crude and remote even as our own prehistoric parentage, rooted far back there when the earth was yet in the making, — the shrine was fashioned for the Heart of Music. And thus it entered; and it travelled and sang down the ages. For then and there the violin was born, as we were born in the first man thing that crawled to life from the darkness of primordial confusion and spoke and walked upright, looking on the sun.

Robert Barr, in writing of a bowman of old, makes him exclaim, as he twangs his weapon melodiously: "There, my lord, is a one-stringed harp, which sings of sudden death and nothing else!"

The thought that all things are first created in embryo is no longer new to us. We can understand the principle of seed, and germ, and protoplasm, — the first pin point of life, the nucleus of all creation in a space too small for the naked eye to see. So the rudimentary forms of all things are of interest to us, and our philologists trace laboriously the origin of words, as our geologists wrest the secrets of the earth's creation from sand and stones. We are in an age that

likes to know why and how. And so it is a loving labour to us to climb down the rocky pathway to the ancientest days of all to find the birthplaces of those divinities which have become the very loves of our hearts in their fulness of perfection. Art, literature, — whatever be the winged thing whose perilous flight we follow awkwardly, — we must needs pilgrimage to the spinning-place of its cocoon, — or to the small corners of the earth when first it was a blind caterpillar. If you will, let us go together as far back as we may in search of the first faint pulsations of the Heart of Music.

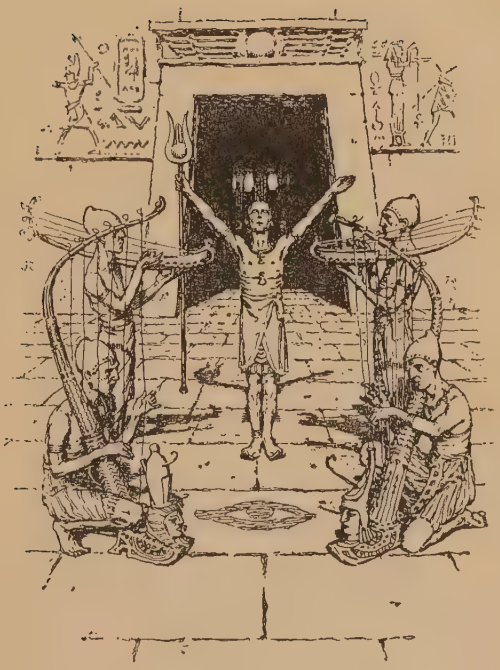
For the violin is music's innermost heart. Soul and brain and body we may find in organ thunders, in passionate voices, in noble harmonies; but the heart is imprisoned for all time in the throbbing wood and quivering strings of the perfect violin. There are those who do not know that the violin is alive, that it has nerves and muscles and moods and impulses like anyone else; that it has fits of temper and moments of exaltation, and times of bitter melancholy and despair, even as the rest of us. The violin is almost as old as man, and its spirit is older, for it fled somewhere through sky spaces before it came to its earthly incarnation. Sometimes, when it is with a friend, it sings of the lost splendour

among the stars; then we say that the master was inspired that night.

Just what age the stringed instrument had when we first hear of it in ancient Egypt we know not. It was probably thousands of years old even then, for there are many wise persons who declare that it had lived to begin with in Asia with the Chinese and the Hindoos. But our records begin first in the country of the sphinxes and the sands. It is quite possible that the reason for this is the unequalled fulness of Egyptian recording, the method and accuracy of their chronicling, and the remarkable quality of Egyptian art. No other nation could have such complete records at so early a period, otherwise, perhaps, we should be beginning our researches in India, or China, or even Babylonia and Phœnicia.

There is much evidence to suggest that India probably was the true birthplace of the primitive stringed instrument, as it undoubtedly was of the bowed instrument later. Nevertheless, to Egypt we must betake ourselves, and in the pink and orange desert light hear the story of how the old priests explained the coming of the Heart of Music.

The Lyre of the World



"I am the great indestructible lyre of the whole world, attuning the songs of heaven." — *Inscription in ancient Egyptian temple.*

II. — The Lyre of the World

NOW the god Thot, corresponding to the Greek Hermes and the Roman Mercury, walked one day along the sun-baked banks of the river Nile, when the world was yet in its first sublime childhood and divinities were human. It was in the dry season, when there was no dampness and no flooding of the river. Many creatures lay dead or dying under the sun, and the water, too, had a song burden of death and decay. There was a great stillness on all things, a stillness that seemed to stretch through all the reaches of the world, and the winds had no more breath to blow.

The god Thot, walking by the river Nile and musing in god fashion on the earth and the earth folk, making no sound on the soft sand as he strode through the silent heat, touched something with his foot as he passed. A faint, sweet sound stirred the hush, and the god Thot paused, asking of himself what thing had spoken out of the nothingness, making joy in the ears like rare food in the mouth. For until then music had not been; even the god Thot had not thought of inventing it. Then, marvelling greatly at the

sweetness that had moved the air, the god Thot looked down. And all that he saw was a dead tortoise lying on the sand. There in the heat it lay, a dry and empty shell, with only the sinews left of all its living flesh. They were stretched hard and tight across the hollow shell, the whole burning dry under the sun.

Then the god Thot said, "Is it this dead thing that has made the sweetness in my ears?" And he put out his foot once more and touched it. And again the breath of loveliness came and passed, and the heart of Thot was moved, and he considered gently the dead tortoise that had made the first music of the world. And he said, "Oh, miracle vouchsafed to gods as well as men! This humble thing, the shell of one so lowly and unpraised, has brought a new glory to the earth. So ugliness becomes beauty!" said the god Thot. Then he picked up the tortoise-shell, and it became, in his hands, a lyre such as gods and spirits play, and he touched it repeatedly, making wonderful music that the world heard and worshipped. And all the other gods said, "This new thing born into the world shall belong first to us the Immortals." So Pthah, the Fire God, had a likeness of himself made in the temple at Dakkah, playing the lyre; and Osiris, the Great

One, made himself the patron of the new thing which they called Music; and the priests worshipped them with the sounding of lyres and the chanting of voices. And Isis, the mother of all, spoke, saying the word that should be inscribed on the temples of the faithful: "I am the great indestructible lyre of the whole world, attuning the songs of heaven."

That was the ancient story of the coming of the Heart of Music. The priests told it to curious or awed inquirers thousands of years ago beside the Nile, when the heat was on the land and many tortoises and other creatures lay dead in the dry-baked mud.

As a matter of fact, we know that the lyre grew with most laborious slowness from a piece of sonorous wood, beaten with a stick or a bit of metal, called a syrinx or harmonicon. Finger-holes were introduced to alter the tone, and finally strings; first, no doubt, as an experiment. They were of animals' sinews or plant fibres to begin with, but the Egyptians quickly substituted metal wires and silk cords. With plectra of wood or bone with which to pick the strings, and a finger-board or neck to govern the length of strings and pitch of tones, the lyre became a lute, known as a tebouni, tamboura, and nebel in its various

forms, and in one variant was called the Nefru (Nefer, Nofre, or Nef), which means "The Good." But the nefru was less the instrument of mysticism and religion than the lyre or harp. These great instruments became inseparable from the sacred rites of the temples, though the nefru was accepted in lighter and more secular connection, and played at concerts. The lyre was most symbolic in its form and tuning. It began with one string, but soon was strung with three,—probably E, F, and G,—named for the three seasons of the Egyptian year, which of course is divided into sections of four months each. The highest string was named spring, the middle one summer, and the lowest winter. Apollodorus tells of the symbolical meaning of the strings, as well as the legend concerning the tortoise. He mentions that the incident happened in the *year of the world 2000!*

George Rawlinson describes Egypt in a singularly poetical way, seeming to create at once an atmosphere of beauty by the charming imagery and metaphor of which he makes use:

"In shape Egypt is like a lily with a curved stem. A broad blossom terminates it at its upper end; a button of a bud projects from its stalk a little below the blossom and on the left-hand side. The broad blossom is the Delta, extending from

Aboosis to Tineh, a direct distance of 180 miles, which the projection of the coast — the peaceful swell of the petals — enlarges to 230. The bud is the Fayoum, a natural depression in the hills that shut in the Nile Valley on the west. . . . The long stalk of the lily is the Nile Valley itself, which is a ravine scooped in the body for 700 miles from the first cataract to the apex of the Delta, sometimes not more than a mile broad, never more than eight or ten miles."

Herodotus calls Egypt the "Gift of the Nile," and indeed it is said that the present foundation of the land was formed by the mud and sediment left by the yearly floods of the river. This mud and sediment, the slime and dregs of a great African river, are what have gone to form Rawlinson's exquisite lily, blossom, bud, and stalk.

The almost magical element in this accumulation of the materials for a country and a nation out of nothing appeals to us to-day; how much more insistently it must have struck the imaginations of the early Egyptians themselves. No wonder they worshipped the great stream to which they owed the very earth they stood on, if not, as they doubtless argued, their actual being.

The mysticism of the Orient was never so marked as in Egypt. There it reached a dignity

of mystery and a splendour of symbolism which haunts the land still, like the ghosts of its dead. Not emptily was it written above the Temple of Sais, "I am all that is, that was, and that will be; no mortal has lifted my veil." Not without reason does the Sphinx stand, an eternal question that no man may answer. Not only in the great, but in the little things, Egypt, the most civilised of nations, the most communicative of chroniclers, has remained dumb. We read her papyri, study her tombs and temples, images and hieroglyphics, see the exquisite remnants of her beautiful daily life, and pause, an unworded as an unanswered question on our lips. No man will ever know what Egypt was; *no mortal has lifted her veil.* Therefore the part her music played is shrouded in a mystery in keeping with her usual secretive habit of mind. Something we may know of its actual use and scope, but its inner, deeper symbolism—no one knows that but the dead gods and the violin. For its ancestors learned the secret in pagan celebrations at Giseh and Dakkah thousands of years before Christ came.

The Egyptians of course were, first and foremost, pantheists. In the priests this pantheism was a dignified and consecrated thing, albeit its observances might shock the Occidental sensibilities

at times. But the deification of nature in all its works was inevitably corrupted later on in the light and vulgar mind and life, and what the priests worshipped in the fear of the gods the youth of Egypt revelled in with rank sensualism. In both these conflicting yet kindred manifestations of a great national philosophy, the stringed instrument played a rarely important part. In the big temples, where the light was faint and the incense heavy, the lyres and harps echoed with slow, monotonous cadences. The priestesses, bearing the pantheistically symbolical sistra, whirled before the great altars; the deification of nature rose in a surge of emotion that beat through the roofs of the temples and stormed the very fire-heart of the sun. Flowers were strewn, and died under the pressure of swift feet, and all the while the echoes of the slowly swept strings mounted to the ears of the gods. "They have begun to sing unto thee upon the harp," says an old Egyptian hymn; "they sing unto thee, keeping time with their hands."

In private feasts the musicians were the chief feature of the entertainments. The great ladies of old Egypt gave musical entertainments that were almost concerts. The harpists and lyrists played before and after the banquet, occasionally giving

place to their companion performers on the programme, — the athletes and gymnasts, whom the Egyptians liked to watch.

The higher class Egyptians — of the very early dynasties — were cultivated, dignified people, with fine mental and moral ideas, and but little of the depravity and unrestraint of the later period. At this time music was an art that was respected and honoured. The priests and acolytes, with shaven heads, played on harps and lyres themselves, and kings deigned to learn the gentle art of making stringed music.

There is a Greek legend that the monarch Amphion built the walls of Thebes by the sound of his lyre. And that legend, by the by, gives us a very interesting point, first advanced by Mr. Clarke, I think, concerning the use of stringed instruments in their very earliest days, in Egypt as much if not more than in Greece. Music was held to be so great and inspiring a power that almost all the public work by the enormous bands of slaves and labourers was accompanied by singing and playing. The workmen themselves sang rhythmically, monotonously at times, finding help apparently in the swing of the measures, even as sailors to-day seem to pull harder on the rope to a Yo heave ho! A charac-

teristic song of the Egyptian labourers was this reiterative bit:

"Thrash ye for yourselves,
Thrash ye for yourselves, O oxen,
Thrash ye,
Thrash ye for yourselves,
The straw which is yours,
The corn which is your masters,
Thrash ye for yourselves!"

When the work became hard and heavy and breath had to be held fast for the bitter biting effort of stone-carrying or masonry, they sang no more. Then bands of musicians began to play, —first the lyres and harps, tenderly, cajolingly; then the drums and cymbals, inspiringly; then the nefrus, softly and gaily. And it was said that the work moved faster to the music, and the great stone wonders grew and grew. So it is indeed possible, as Mr. Clarke says, that the walls of Thebes were built to the music of the lyre. A strange thought, that the Temple of Susa may represent a succession of harp tones, and that the Great Pyramid rose to a song.

Plato speaks of the theory of the ancient Egyptians that beauty should be the guiding influence in the lives of young people, not only beauty of line but beauty of thought. He says that they believed that "nothing but beautiful forms and fine music should be admitted to the

assemblies of young people." This theory brought the stringed instrument to a post of great dignity for a time, and it accompanied all the great festivals given by the educated classes.

The Egyptian feasts of this period—the third and fourth dynasties — were very different from the orgies that grew nationally characteristic in the mad later days of the hot-blooded Ptolemies. In an era when the work of every man's life was the construction of his tomb and the composition of his own laudatory epitaph, one could only expect a certain sobriety, even in pleasure.

The banquets described by the ancients sound miracles of deportment and innocence. The guests having arrived, servants placed about the neck of each a garland of flowers, and upon each head a lotus flower, as symbolical of the pleasure of the host in receiving them. Then they were seated in the banqueting hall, all married couples together, and the unmarried men and women discreetly separated. In token of homage, servants touched the head of each person with perfumed ointment, and then set before them little tables loaded with meat and fruit and small cakes. Wine cups were passed around, and music was played in subdued tones, that the conversation might not be disturbed nor made difficult.

The Egyptian women of rank were all highly educated and helped their husbands in their public life, and these musical feasts were often the scenes of serious discussion and interesting debates. When the banquet was over the tables were removed and the regular performance of the evening began. After the athletes had wrestled and the gymnasts had shown their skill, the concert commenced, — the musicians playing until they could play no more, and the audience listening with critical pleasure.

These were the good days of Egypt, before her beautiful æstheticism and nature worship brought her low with one of those pendulum swings which make or unmake nations.

The almost inconceivable antiquity of the stringed instrument is shown by a picture of a harp in the tomb at Gyseh, of the date 4975 B.C. In the time of Beni-Hassan, the first Pharaoh, in 3892 B.C., when the scale of music was already seven notes, the priests called them "The Seven Sacred Sounds" and "The Seven Sounding Tones Praising The Great God," who was Beni-Hassan. But it was not until the reign of Rameses III of the twelfth dynasty — 1250–1284 B.C. — that the stringed instrument, as chiefly represented by the harp, reached its height in Egyptian history.

At that time it was one of the most beautiful instruments ever made; whole fortunes were spent on one alone, for each was beautifully carved and ornamented with the figures of gods, goddesses, sphinxes, and animals, and inlaid with gold, silver, ivory, tortoise-shell, and mother-of-pearl. Sometimes parts of the frame were bound in velvet and morocco and decorated with all manner of vivid colours, — purple, crimson, and green. The pictures of harps found at Thebes by Mr. Bruce were marvellously detailed and showed the instruments to have been barely less than six and a half feet high, with twenty-six strings. The strings of nearly all the Egyptian harps were made of the intestines of camels. The famous semicircular harp, also discovered at Thebes, was in a perfect state of preservation. It had a frame covered with heavy red leather, and twenty strings; and it still vibrated and gave forth sounds when touched!

These large harps, of course, were played standing up; others, with slender iron rests to support them, could be played sitting down, and one lovely, graceful curved instrument was always played with the musician kneeling beside it, as though in adoration of its beautiful form and more beautiful tone. Nearly all the harps were slightly

curved in shape, for the Egyptians loved flowing lines, and perhaps had further mastered the knowledge that angles do not give the fullest vibration of tone. One of the little lyres was triangular, however, and was called the trigonon. The god Pthah is represented as playing upon this sort of an instrument. Most of these lyres seem to have belonged to an earlier era and more primitive musical knowledge. Rousseau insisted that the Egyptians had a bow instrument, but as there is no record of any kind to substantiate his theory, it is fairly safe to leave it uncredited. Of course the instrument which Rousseau thought was played with a bow must have been the form of tamboura known as the nefru, which does faintly resemble the general line and character of our violin. But according to the records it was played by a plectrum.

Nearly all Eastern instruments of the lyre character were made out of sycamore, in cylindrical form, or, in some Oriental countries, of hollowed-out gourds or cocoanuts, highly polished and with the top covered with dried skin or very thin and fine-grained satinwood. The neck was always very long and slender and the number of strings three, two, or even one. Some of the Egyptian tambouras, or lutes, had great numbers

of frets, making a vast variety of tones possible, even on these few strings. The nefru, harp, and lyre were usually played together, with cymbals, drums, and, in the temple celebrations, sistra. There were an enormous number of musical instruments, some of them of curious shape and sharp tone, that were played in all sorts of strange ways, — by shaking, striking, and scraping. The harp and lyre seem to have been the only instruments that were not relegated to professionals, and even the harp and lyre fell into disrepute with the general decadence of Egypt.

The professional musicians were all of the lowest classes in Egypt, — a class much lower than that of servants. Theirs was a hereditary office, — like all the professions and trades of Egypt. Son succeeded to father inevitably, and the descendants of a musician were always musicians, however much they might wish to change their estate or work. This immutable custom permitted no margin for personality or inclination; but the Egyptians did not believe in any mingling of classes or broadening of conventions, and apparently it never occurred to the hereditary artisans, cooks, metal workers, grain-grinders and scribes, weavers and buffoons, gymnasts and musicians, to rebel against the established order of things.

There was one class of musicians, however, who were honoured, — those who played in the temples. It was only in the very early days that the priests themselves monopolised the lyre and harp, and every temple had its "Sacred Musicians," known as "The Minstrels of the Gods." This is one of the old pantheistic songs, worshipping the Nile, which the priests used to chant in the dry season to the accompaniment of the harps and flutes and lyres and nefru:

"Incline thy face, O Nile,
Coming safe out of the land,
Vivifying Egypt!
Hiding his dark sources from the light,
Ordering his sources;
The streams of his bed are made by the sun,
To give life to all animals,
To water the lands which are destitute.
Coming all along the heaven,
Loving fragrance, offering grain,
Rendering verdant every sacred place of Ptha."

The Egyptian priests combined music and astronomy in their mysterious religion. Strings were tuned to planets, and the signs of the zodiac were gods. We have already heard of the "Seven Great Tones" of the Egyptian scale. They represented the planets known to us as the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, and Venus. They were also the seven days of the week.

Different keys represented different gods, and varying combinations of tones were varying constellations. So intricate and interdependent was this extraordinary network of music, philosophy, religion, astrology, astronomy, and pantheism that it is impossible for the modern Occidental brain to even reach the basic principles of the system. Undoubtedly it vastly influenced the stringed music of the time, and perhaps even the forms and general character of the instruments themselves.

In the primitive instruments there was no system of tuning. The tension of the strings was regulated by a bar at the upper end of the instrument. This bar was set at an angle, and the strings tied around it so that by sliding the strings up or down the bar they could be made tight or loose as the player willed, and thus the depth of tone fairly well regulated.

The mystic and solemn faith of early Egypt crashed into a chaos of decadence in 315 B.C., after her conquest by Cambyses. From that time on her downfall was a thing doomed. The wild blood of the Ptolemies wasted her ancient dignity; her own superb passions corrupted her; her own people overthrew her. As the magnificent freedom and fire of the old pantheism became license and sin, so did her old

music, sacred to the gods and to high uses, become a thing of vileness and shame. The stringed instruments beloved by the older Egyptians fell into the hands of roisterers and idlers, and the sacred sistrum was used as the accompaniment to shameless dances. Voluptuousness instead of æstheticism, sensuality instead of nature worship, indecency instead of passion, held Egypt in their great grip; and the gods hid their faces before the devastation of a nation's soul. So it was that the stringed instrument fell into evil company and forgot its old slow melodies that the gods had loved.

Then it was, say the old priestly chronicles, that Osiris, the Great One, forbade any players of harps or lyres and any singers of songs to enter his temples, banishing music from his altars and musicians from his favour. Then there were only women who played and sang — dancing-girls and naked slaves, and those others who wore many ornaments and strange scents. And the wise men of Egypt, sorrowing, proclaimed that he who would be strong and clean must forswear music. Fathers forbade their sons and daughters to learn to sing, and harps and tambouras were broken because their only message now was Sin.

And no man spoke again of the Lyre of the World, for now the Lyre of the World was tuned to lust and shame and the madness of life.

In a moment of too bitter sight the priests of the old gods made a song that cried out against the desecrations of their shrines:

"The cattle are driven mad, —
Mad — mad — mad!
And all the world, both great and small, are in torment."

The Star of Shame

"And they called her Ashtart which means Star, and added thereto the vowels of Bosheth, which, in the Massoretic text, signifies Shame."
— *Ancient Chronicle of Assyria.*

III. — The Star of Shame

SHE stood high up on gold and silver altars and always smiled, — that strange, cruel smile of the East. Her temples were roofed with cedar from the groves of Mount Lebanon; her priests wore rich raiment and preached a cult of the senses. Jewels flamed about her shrines, and in the perfumed dusk new blood showed crimson upon the floors, lit by the fire of sacrifice. Voices screamed in agony, but the clash of cymbals drowned them; and still she smiled, with slim hands upon her bosom and half-shut, greedy eyes.

The Heart of Music beat to a mad tune in those days, for it was the servant of the goddess Ashtoroth. Most inconsiderable was its dwelling-place, — the heart, — for no longer did it inhabit tall, beautiful harps whereon priests in white linen played to please Osiris; it throbbed as best it might in little lyres that accompanied the terrible ceremonies of the worship of the Star of Shame, as men called her even then.

Sometimes known as Astarte, sometimes as Ashtar, Istar, and in at least a few texts as Melitta and Nana, she was adored by the people

of nearly all the ancient monarchies. There are records to show that to begin with she was a pure and beneficent goddess, a sort of Juno and Ceres in one, the queen of the heavens and the spirit of fruitfulness. But the goddess beloved by the Assyrians, Phœnicians, and Babylonians was very far from being that gracious deity. Perhaps it was when she became typical of all degradation and cruelty that the scribes wrote of her, "and added thereto the vowels of Bosheth, which signifies Shame." In the religion of all the nations that played out their magnificent destinies in the centuries before Christ, Ashtoroth had a place. Even in Egypt they built a temple to her, though she was not of the old Egyptian gods. Everything about her appealed to, as it was the outcome of, a spirit much baser and gayer, at once more brutal and more brilliant than that of Egypt. Ashtoroth was not only the synonym of license and sensuality, but also of the most inconceivable and merciless cruelty that the world has ever seen. Men and women were tortured — for the sake of Ashtoroth; little children were offered up as sacrifices — to satisfy Ashtoroth; great bands of the frantic populace scourged themselves with whips and tore their flesh with knives and swords, driven mad by the worship of Ashtoroth,

—Ashtoroth, the silent, the smiling, the insatiable, the monstrous.

Like a pillar of fire she blazed throughout Chaldea and Assyria, Babylonia and Phœnicia. Like a scarlet flame, many years later, she entered Judea, when, according to old tales, Princess Jezebel, the daughter of Eth-baal, King of Tyre, journeyed there. King Solomon built a temple in her honour, and she smiled havoc upon the Hebrew people from her terrible altar.

And in all her rites, in all her rule, in all her intricate, mighty ways of darkness, sounded always the voice of lyre and harp, and other stringed instruments akin to those played by the Egyptians. The small harp of the Assyrians was called the kinnor; a small stringed instrument beloved in Babylon was the sambouca, or sabecha, a little trigonon of four strings, made to accompany women's voices. In Lydia was the mysterious stringed magadis. "Oh, Leucaspis, I sing in making sound my Lydian magadis of twenty strings!" In Sidon they played the nebel, which was much like the Egyptian nofre; we have read of "the strings of the sonorous Sidonian nebel." In Phœnicia they had the sambuka also.

The Assyrian harps were chromatically tuned, and in very early days they were large and beauti-

fully made, like those of Egypt; but these instruments speedily fell into disfavour, giving place to the lyre, which could be carried through the streets. All the famous old cities — Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Sidon, and the rest — were full of men and women who ran playing and singing under the sunshine or moonlight, driving themselves half mad with intoxicating music. Music seems to have been a tremendous factor in the emotional and unbridled lives of these ancient peoples — above all, the Phœnicians.

We remember the tragedy of the picture sketched by Isaiah (xxiii) in his arraignment of Tyre: "After seventy years shall Tyre sing like a harlot; take a harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered."

It has been said that the religious fanatics used to rush half mad through the streets, singing, playing, and mutilating themselves. To add to the riotous noise of cymbals, harps, and reed instruments, the women had a peculiar shrill trill which they made by clapping their fingers rhythmically upon their mouths and crying a very high reiterated note. This curious tremolo is practised still among the singing women of Syria, Persia, and Arabia.

The Chaldeans, albeit they were all half crazed by devil worship and superstition, more closely resembled Egypt in certain religious forms and philosophic theories. They lent their music a certain fantastic dignity, and used their sambuka to accompany some of their strange chants and incantations. They had one song of exorcism, purposing to drive away the Moskim, — demons of the abyss, or world of the dead, — which was accompanied by the lyre and harp. It was as follows:

"They are seven! They are seven!
Seven they are in the depths of the ocean,
Seven they are, disturbers of the face of heaven.
They arise from the depths of the ocean,
From hidden lurking-places;
They spread like snares.
Male they are not, female they are not;
Wives they have not, children are not born to them.
Order they know not, nor beneficence;
Prayers nor supplications they hear not.
Vermin conceived in the womb of the mountains,
Foes of Êa!
They are the throne-bearers of the gods,
But they crouch in the roads
And bring danger.
Fiends! Fiends! Fiends!
They are seven! Seven they are!"

The Chaldeans, like the Egyptians, invested the strings of their instruments and the different tones and intervals in music with the characters of

seasons, days, hours, planets, and zodiacal signs. They had one curious fashion of symbolising spring's relation to autumn, winter's to summer, by the respective intervals of a fourth, a fifth, and an octave.

The Assyrians — their power swept upward in 1250 B.C., when they conquered Babylon — were men of blood and lust, well stocked with sinews, but wasting no mercy. Glory was their passion, passion their glory. War was their life, life their war. They laughed at pain, yet agonised for the sake of joy. Their pride was in that they were shameless, but their deity was the Star of Shame.

The spirit of the Assyrians is shown in this proud and boastful inscription upon one ancient hero's grave:

"The men, young and old, I took prisoners. Of some I cut off the feet and hands; of others I cut off the noses, ears, and lips. Of the young men's ears I made a heap; of the old men's heads I built a tower. The male children and the female children I burned in the flames."

The Assyrian monarchs were violently despotic and demanded that all things should exist but to serve their greatness. Music, the beloved of Ashtoroth, was also the handmaid of kings.

The harp and nebel and lyre were used to celebrate the success of warriors and the joys of rulers in times of peace. On the ruined walls of Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh are still to be seen the representation of men and women in great masses welcoming him, after a triumphant battle, with music and dancing. Few of these ancient palaces — those of Sargon, Tiglah-Pileser II, Sardanapalus, Semiramis, and the rest — fail to show some evidence of the important if ignoble part played by stringed instruments in national and daily life.

Byron laid his finger on the pulse of the ancient empires when, in his "Sardanapalus," he wrote:

> ". . . Hark! the lute,
> The lyre, the timbrel; the lascivious tinklings
> Of lulling instruments, — the softening voices
> Of women. . . ."

The Assyrian harps were usually about four feet high, but the great quantity of ornate ornamentation about the base of the instruments, the high, carved rest, and other unnecessary fashions of decoration, made them seem much higher than they really were. The harps had no front pillar and were very light in weight, in spite of their elaborate ornamentation, and could be carried easily while the player danced to the strains of his own music. The strings of the Assyrian harps

were of silk as a rule, and they nearly all had tuning-pegs. Note this, in view of the general acceptance of the theory that tuning-pegs were invented by Claudius Ptolemy in the third century A.D. There were harps fitted with tuning-pegs in Assyria and other Oriental nations many years before Christ.

No man honoured the heart of music in those days, but all men recognised its power. It was contemned by the wise and virtuous, but it was not condemned. It was sometimes ignored, but it was never forgotten. In the sambuka and the nebel, the harp and lyre, the troubled heart of music strove to find expression. But that was to be not yet. High yearning it might fugitively express among the wise old priests of Alexandria and Memphis. Strange orgies it might enter in Tyre or Babylon, tuning its vibrating pulses to the leaping blood of the mad folk about it. But its own song — the sweet, infinite, intimate song of the innermost life-shrine of music — it was yet to sing. Many and long were its paths to be before it entered into its rightful abiding-place, and, — given back its own voice, at last, — learned again to sing the songs of the true gods.

At Susa they worshipped Astarte, calling her sometimes Melitta, for reasons which we do not

know. This is one of the most illustrious monuments to the puissance of this sardonic deity. In the bulls' heads used in the temple architecture we may conjecture that Baal, or some prototype of his, was symbolised. He is chiefly known as "Eth-Baal, Lord of Tyre," but was worshipped elsewhere as a consort or co-deity of Astarte, a divine Moloch, demanding, like her, blood and debauchery in his sacrificial rites. In the decorations at Susa we find the representations of many tamboura, showing that the lute as well as the lyre was used by the servants of Ashtoroth to glorify her voluptuous and most terrible name.

Babylon had a strange and fluctuating history; her pendulum of fate swung high and low through dizzying degrees of triumph and defeat, such as could only have been known in days of such magnificent and terrible extremes as rocked the earth in the pre-christian era. Babylon, — whose name was derived, as though by some irony of fate, from Bab-illu, the Gate of God, — was one of the mightiest and oldest of all the ancient monarchies. Conquered by the Assyrians in 1250 B.C., she rose in power as Assyria fell. In 605 B.C. Phœnicia, already tributary to Assyria, was given up to Babylon, and in 600 B.C. Nabopolassar, viceroy of Babylon, destroyed Nineveh

and so released his people from the Assyrian oppression. In 594 B.C. Egypt too came into Babylonian power through the long-disputed question of authority in Syria. Nebuchadnezzar went into Judea in 586 B.C. and brought back the people of Jerusalem into what was known as "The Great Captivity." In 538 B. C., however, Babylon fell at the hands of Cyrus of the Persians. Her career was the longest and most brilliant of all the old empires. For more than a thousand years she was "the centre of Asiatic civilisation," says one historian, and her story was as magical and marvellous as a song. Wicked, beautiful, brilliant, decadent, seductive, and mysterious, the charm of Babylon reaches us to-day as indestructibly, as surely as though she still reigned among her Hanging Gardens on the banks of the Euphrates.

The Hanging Gardens were made by Nebuchadnezzar to please Amytis his wife, a daughter of Media. She hated that sterile, dry-baked country and longed for the flowers and green things of her own land, and the king rebuilt Babylon in order to create an illusion for her discontented eyes. Among the Hanging Gardens and exotic trees, upon the mimic mountain in the city's heart, forever sounded music, — music languorous and

intoxicating, or feverish and compelling. The ancients knew the secret of touching the senses with sounds to a degree which it is difficult for our minds, less cultivated emotionally, to grasp. They were tone epicures, these people of the dead world. Not only had they the knowledge of how to strike a harp so that the listening heart was struck also, but they knew how to be moved themselves. They had the gift of supersensitive response to the faintest changes of sound, and their finely trained senses stirred snake-like to the lightest breath of the sambuka, played by slow hands among the green trees of the Hanging Gardens.

In Babylonia the Star of Shame was known as Istar, and typified war as well as love. She was worshipped with every sort of unholy rite conceivable, life and fortune being the least of the sacrifices offered at her blood-stained altars. Her emblem was a tree, to signify the generative principle and fruition both in one. She was supposed to be the mother of two sons worshipped also as gods, — Eros and Pothos. The first of these meant Love, but the second, Desire.

Baal as well as Ashtoroth was worshipped by music. We see in the Bible that Nebuchadnezzar commanded all men to do homage to these hideous

gods to the sound of sweet airs: "Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up" (Daniel iii, 4, 5). The "golden image" is generally understood to have been Baal, but may have been Astarte, since she too was worshipped by Nebuchadnezzar. It is still more probable that the two, god and goddess, were adored together, their general character and mission seeming so peculiarly similar.

To Babylonia came the Jewish captives from Jerusalem, bearing their harps and psalteries with which they had been wont to sing the praises of Jehovah. It is strange and rather lovely to think that they should bear their musical instruments with them into the Great Captivity. To them the Heart of Music had a sweeter and closer call than to the pagan kingdoms. They heard comfort sing in the vibrating metal strings that they loved, and consolation came to them in touch of these primitive dear things, even as it comes to a musician to-day who holds his violin, mute, in his arms. There has been much evolution in the

house of the Heart of Music, but little in the heart itself.

We all know the marvellous description in Psalm cxxxvii:

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

"We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

"For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

Already the Israelites were renowned for their skill in music. Moses, who studied with Egyptian priests, was well learned in musical science, such as it was in those days, and harps played an important part in the religious observances in the temples at Jerusalem. The kinnor, which legend says was invented by Jubal, was the beloved of many hearts, and the larger harps were also much in use in Judea. To Simon Maccabæus, 200 B.C., is attributed the invention of the first of the beautiful silver and copper harps so beloved by the Jews. David's own harp was strung with gold. Legend — or history — says that he always slept with it

above his pillow, that the light airs of the night might stir it and the sound drift through his dreams.

It is written that Elisha, in prophesying, suddenly exclaimed, "Now bring me a minstrel!" and that while the harper played, "the hand of the Lord came upon him" and he saw the future. The two greatest Israelitish musicians, of course, were Solomon and that David of beloved memory who charmed the soul-sick king, Saul, by the magic of his harp with strings of gold.

> ". . . God's child with His dew," sings Browning,
> "On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living and blue
> Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat
> Were now raging to torture the desert! . . ."

To David, the yellow-haired shepherd, belongs the honour of the crown of psalms. The word "psalm" seems to have been a hybrid article signifying, at will, a "sacred hymn" or a "musical instrument." Undoubtedly the Psalms of David were all made to be sung. There is, indeed, every evidence in favour of this assumption; and from the "psalm" was derived the word "psaltery" as the name for an instrument which endured far into the Christian era, and indeed until the Middle Ages. The Hebrews are generally credited with its invention, but records show that it was derived

originally from an Oriental instrument, the name for which best survives in the qanun of the Arabs. The psaltery was a small square-shaped instrument with a handle like that of a magnifying-glass, and usually ten strings, without pegs or other facilities for tuning. In later years St. Jerome had a naïve theory that the psaltery's ten strings represented the Ten Commandments, and the four corners of the square frame the Four Gospels. Some of the psalteries, however, had fewer strings. Psalms vi and viii are headed with the direction "To be sung on eight strings." And there is also room for the theory that there was in the land of Israel a survival of the Egyptian musical system based on the "Seven Great Tones."

There was also the cithar, an instrument with a back shaped like a tortoise, tuned to diminished chords. This of course, unlike the harp and psaltery, was almost exclusively dedicated to secular uses.

It was a strange land indeed to which the captives had come, bearing their harps and psalteries. Surely it was in such passionate laments of slavery as the smitten strings must have learned then, in such broken utterings of despair, that the Heart of Music gained its dirge and protest, — the inimitable, limitless wail that

sometimes sounds beneath the bow of the violin to-day. The human note of pain entered its pulses then, and it has never lost it, through all its long journey up the years. It carries with it yet the memory of lost, mad days and nights beneath the hot and languid skies of the Old World. It remembers the sick sweetness of its own strange song before the altars in Nineveh and Tyre, and the mourning melody that it knew when the Israelites played in bondage. Through the good days of its destiny it has not fogotten those few thousands of years when men worshipped Ashtoroth and the world was on fire.

Dream Music

"Since hearing it, I feel a strange longing, as for a loved one far away."—*Kalidasa, 56 B.C.*

IV. — Dream Music

So old that all the lagging centuries of mortal time must seem but as butterflies flitting across the sea; so old that only the warm earth and the far stars can seem contemporaries; so old that the beginning wears no veil, Asia has dreamed out her thousands of years, unsolved, unstirred, unchanged. The Far East, whither we are bent now, — China and India, — has been from the commencement of time a place of dreams. Even when she was young and vigorous China loved best to meditate and philosophise, and dwell among phantoms and grow wise. And as her religion and her life, so were her arts all mystic and introspective. Sensuous she was, but æsthetically so, not brutally; passionate she was, but silently, not violently; glad she was, but gravely; melancholy, but with the philosophy of understanding.

There was one curious point about the Chinese character, however, — a sort of paradox, which, perhaps, is the secret of our utter inability, as races, to understand each other to this day. In all things the Chinese loved symmetry and accuracy, — an odd quality when you attach to it

the Oriental dreamfulness of their character. It is these two traits which have made China so marvellous in philosophy and so unprogressive in what we term civilisation. Two elements, so strangely dissimilar and yet so interdependent, brought forth a Confucius, even as they keep solid the wall between China and the world.

The Chinese, as more than one writer has pointed out, are pedantic to a fault; but it is a fantastic pedantry. Their sciences and arts are all stamped with a curious ordered poetry, a utilitarian imagination. In their pottery, painting, embroidery, and all the decorative arts they show the same minute care in detail, the same fanciful exaggerations, the same extravagance of invention, the same painstaking and fantastic, if sometimes grotesque, method of execution.

In their music and musical instruments they did not step out of character. They invented immense numbers of keys; they invested their musical system with philosophic, moral, and governmental significance, and yet worked this theory out on such limited, cramped lines that their music has never grown beyond its primitive state. And to-day their instruments are no more perfected than they were when they were invented.

In 2950 B.C. the Chinese sage Fo-Hi, or Fouhi, invented the kin and the che, both stringed instruments. Fétis seems to consider the kin the more important of the two, but according to all other authorities the kin was only a lute, something in the shape of a pear, and having four strings of indifferent quality of tone. Inside it were several bells which jangled when the strings were twanged. The che, however, was much more perfect. It was nine feet in length and had twenty-five strings in the chromatic scale. It was raised a short distance from the floor, like a dulcimer, and was played by musicians kneeling or crouching beside it. Naumann calls it a "table psaltery," which is an ambiguous term but perhaps describes it as well as any other. Its name che means "the wonderful," and it is the national instrument of China. To it are sung all the ancient music, the hymns of praise, the chants and songs of antiquity. With it is always played the po-fou, which is a small drum. One musician emphasises the time on the po-fou, another emphasises the melody on the che, and a third sings.

We are told that all the musicians of the ancient world were blind. They are reported so in the old chronicles and portrayed so in the old pictures.

A curious reminder of this tradition is found in the "Blind Beggars of Spain."

Prince Tsay-yu, a philosopher and student, once explained this tradition as follows: "The ancient musicians closed their eyes while performing, so that no external object should engage their attention, and it is from this habit that the people gave them the name of the Blind."

This explanation, whether true or false, is intensely Chinese in its gravely fantastic idea.

Very Asiatic also is the wedding of music and perfume which is shown in all the Chinese pictures of the past. When musicians played there was always somewhere near a mass of flowers. This extreme of æstheticism is amazing to us who look upon the suggestion of possible synonyms in the arts purely as a very recent vagary of decadent imagination.

The Chinese, like the Chaldeans and Egyptians, invested the notes of their scales and the strings of their kin and che with special cosmic significance. Indeed they carried their musical philosophy to such an extraordinary degree that they made their scale a legal institution, forbidding the hasty introduction of new tones as they would forbid hasty legislation. Their original scale was pentatonic of course, and was composed of whole

tones, representing the independent things, — heaven, sun, and man, — and half tones, typifying the dependent things, — earth, moon, and woman. One note of their scale was named "The Emperor," one "The Prime Minister," one "Loyal Subjects," one "Affairs of State," one "The Mirror of the World." They called the whole "The World Music" and believed that the holy bird Fung-Hoang invented it, creating the whole tones himself, while his mate made the half tones.

They were "the only people," says Naumann, "who, thousands of years ago, possessed a system of octaves, a circle of fifths, and a normal tone. With this knowledge, however, their *eighty-four scales,* each of which has a special philosophical significance, appear all the more incomprehensible to us."

The eighty-four keys seem to argue an extraordinary sensibility of ear in any case; for our carefully cultivated musical perceptions would be incapable of noting such subtle gradations of pitch.

There are two theories as to the next era in the destiny of the Heart of Music. That of Fétis and other illustrious authorities is that the violin was born in the Orient, — in India, in point of fact, — and thus carried out into the Occidental world by slow and also casual degrees, through the

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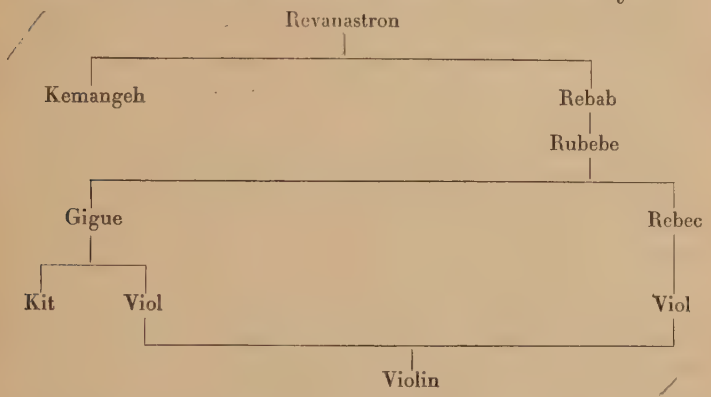
Indians, Arabs, and others. That of Edward John Payne and many others even as erudite and well informed is that the stringed instrument was carried in very primitive form into Greece by the Phœnicians, who had gotten it from Egypt and, as they had done with the alphabet and many other products and methods, made commercial use of it. To this theory we answer that the imported instrument must have been extraordinarily primitive — if it was imported; for the first stringed instrument known in Greece was the monochord, — a crude affair with one untunable string, — later developed to utilitarian rather than artistic uses. The Egyptians, as we know, had very complete stringed instruments. Nevertheless, since no man knows the truth, we must consider all sides and theories.

The ravanastron, or revanastron, was an Indian invention, but long before it was achieved the Hindoos had their exquisite vina. It was a long slender tube, with elaborate decoration, many frets, and a gourd or hollow box near each end for resonance. The grace of these instruments was extraordinary, and their tone most lovely. They were famous for their enormous range of chromatic tones. Music was rather complicated and extensive in India in those days.

According to Heron-Allen, whose views coincide with those of Fétis, the violin genealogy would be as follows, beginning with the revanastron, of which we shall hear more shortly:



There is a pretty little old tale about the devotion of the Gopi, nymphs and shepherdesses, to the young god Krishna, temporarily incarnated upon earth as a handsome shepherd. There were sixteen thousand Gopi, and in order to win the god's favour from her sisters, each one invented, to do him homage, a new key. This story is, of course, most fanciful and fantastic, but there survive still thirty-six keys in India. The charm of the vina has been commemorated by every Hindoo and Mohammedan poet; it is a seductive thing enough, with a wailing note and an insistent element of mystic enchantment.

Some of us have read versions of that marvellous poem Goethe loved, "Sakuntala," written by Kalidasa in the year 56 B.C. One scene is particularly significant musically. King Dushyanta enters his garden and is greeted by two singers. He seats himself with his friend, Madhawga. The sound of a vina is heard through the grove:

"*Madhawga:* Hark, do you not hear the sound of song from yonder room? It is the harmony of a perfectly tuned vina.[1] 'T is there the Princess plays.

"*King:* Hush! Let me listen! [*The voice of Sakuntala is heard. She sings, accompanying herself on her vina.*] Since hearing it, I feel a strange longing, — as though for a loved one far away!"

Love songs, however, form but an inconsiderable portion of the lyrical poetry of India. The true Oriental — one should rather say the true Asiatic — spirit is more clearly manifested in religious chants, and in these the literature of the country abounds. Many of them were composed, obviously, to be sung to the accompaniment of vina, ravanastron, and other stringed instruments, and the most laggard fancy can intersperse the melancholy minor chords so beloved to

[1] The phrase "perfectly tuned" seems to show that tuning-pegs were already in use in India.

children of the East between the exalted dreaminess of such stanzas as we may be privileged to read or hear.

One of the most characteristic Hindoo poems is the following:

"He who gives alms
Goes to the highest place —
He goes to the Gods . . .
Where there is light eternal
In the world where the sun is placed! —
In that immortal, imperishable world,
Place me, O Soma! —
Where there is happiness and delight,
Where joy and pleasure reside,
Where the desires of our heart are attained:
— There make me immortal."

To the Asiatics we must acknowledge an incomparably deep debt of gratitude. They were the first people to invent and make use of a bow on strings. Almost five thousand years ago Ravanon, King of Ceylon, made the first bow instrument, called the ravanastron, —called also, as has already been said, revanastron. It was a cylinder of sycamore wood hollowed out from one end to the other and strung with fibres of wild beasts. The first bows were merely bamboo canes made rough by tiny cuts in the wood and drawn across the string with a very crude twanging effect. Finally hair and resin were added to the cane and

the bow was made. There were several kinds of bows, and all had names, — garika, kona, parivadas, and others. Sometimes the ravanastron was strung with silk instead of animals' sinews; nearly all Asiatic instruments have silk strings to-day.

The top of the instrument — the thin board stretched over the cavity and under the strings — was usually of satinwood of the very finest and softest fibre. In the corrupted forms of the revanastron, the rebab and kemangeh, played by the Arabs to-day, are much more crude. Naumann, as well as Heron-Allen and Fétis, consider the rebab "the precursor of all our stringed instruments," saying that the Crusaders probably brought it back with them to France and England.

India had a magoudi, or guitar, also, and to-day possesses an exquisitely shaped but primitive violin called the serinda. There was also a sitar in Northern India, — a sort of guitar or lute.

The mystery and mysticism of music is marvellously understood by the Orientals — above all by the Indian people. One writer speaks of "the soft sentimentality of the Hindoo"; but it goes deeper than that. The melancholy, sensuous tenderness of the Indian race, the brooding passion, the passive emotionalism, — these things

are not soft nor sentimental. They are the inevitable national expression, the outcome of thousands of years spent in dreams. The inner life of India has always been as acute, as vital as the external, — perhaps even more so in its importance and effect. The mystic existence of the soul has been from the beginning of paramount value to the Asiatic. He has always lived in dreams, and his music is perhaps the most characteristic and elemental expression of the eternal revery of the race.

Although this is hardly the place to speak of Persia, the great mysterious nation forever to us associated with Zoroaster and the rose-garden of Omar, yet before we leave the East we must pause for a moment to offer tribute to Persian music, the sensuously yet tenderly poetic music which is as lovely to-day as it was a thousand years ago.

The Persians were a renownedly musical people. Although they were splendid soldiers, they were the gentlest, most artistic of races, and song came as readily from their lips as perfume from a rose. John Lord speaks of "their love of truth, their heroism in war, the simplicity of their habits . . . their kindness toward women and slaves," and other gentle traits pleasant to dwell on amid

the battle, murder, and sudden death that fills the chronicles of antiquity.

When Parmenio, Alexander's general, conquered Persia he found three hundred and twenty-nine women musicians in the royal palace, — proof positive of the position music held in ancient Persia.

The Islamite races fed on dreams and poured visions into their songs as into their tales. The Arabs dreamed on the desert, the Moors dreamed in the mountains, the Turks dreamed in the palaces,— everywhere they dreamed, and still dream, under the changeless orange sun. Haroun al Raschid was not the only ruler of the East to pardon a woman prisoner because of the lute-playing of an attendant, which set him dreaming so that he forgot his wrath.

Dreams — dreams! They come like phantoms, evoked by the very whisper of the word "Orient" — the East, the Enigma of the World. The thought brings pictures sketched in tones of shadow. The sonorous tumbling music of the Ganges, the white flame-tipped wonders of the Himalayas, the dense wetgreen of the jungle in spring, the echo of the temple bell across the sentient stillness of noon, — these things come to us at the very name of India. Strange to think that

our violin, well governed, well learned, sprang into life among those everlasting hills and infinite mysteries, gaining strange wisdom from priest and peasant, tuning its heart to a song beyond our understanding, filling its answering strings with dream music not entirely of this world.

For after all it is to India that we owe the greatest debt, and it is India who of them all has dreamed most greatly, most marvellously through the centuries. There is an old poem called "The Hindoo." It ends in this fashion:

> "His lute and vina are beloved things,
> He learns their souls, and counts each echo dear,
> And he has taught his heart the way to hear
> The ancient dream that lingers in the strings."

Apollo's Message

"How he comforts his heart with the sound of the lyre,
Fairly and cunningly arched, and adorned with a bridge of silver,
Stimulating his courage, and singing the deeds of the heroes."

The Iliad.

V.—Apollo's Message

TO the tribes of half-savage men who eked out an insufficient living among rugged mountains and uncultivated land, who battled with wild beasts and wandered ever from place to place, driving their cattle before them and improvising rude shelters with straw and brushwood, there came strange vessels full of men over the mysterious sea. These men wore rich garments and bore all manner of things shaped finely and fashioned of gold. They carried, too, great quantities of stuff and draperies dyed in rare shades of purple and crimson. The barbarians marvelled greatly at the newcomers, who said that they were Phœnicians, merchants from the city of Sidon. And the barbarians, endowed even at this remote era with the adoration of beauty, welcomed the Phœnicians and entered into commerce with them, gaining many of the marvellous things that loaded their ships and giving land and brother ships to the newcomers. For the rugged and unproductive land was that which one day was to yield up groves of olive trees and tangles of

grapevines, and the barbarians were to be known as the Greeks.

They acquired the habits of civilisation very rapidly, building rarely beautiful palaces and cultivating orchards and grainfields, learning the arts, and assimilating the usages of the most advanced Eastern education. Every great nation has had to be an adaptable, assimilative one, accruing to itself the best of other countries rather than growing up and developing in its own unbreached citadels. There can be no high progress that is purely internal and concentrated; or so we must believe if we study our histories and philosophies. All seeds require fertilisation, and as the hermit never could learn to be a king or captain of men, so the arrogant, unadaptable race could never fulfil itself and become a ruling principle of the world.

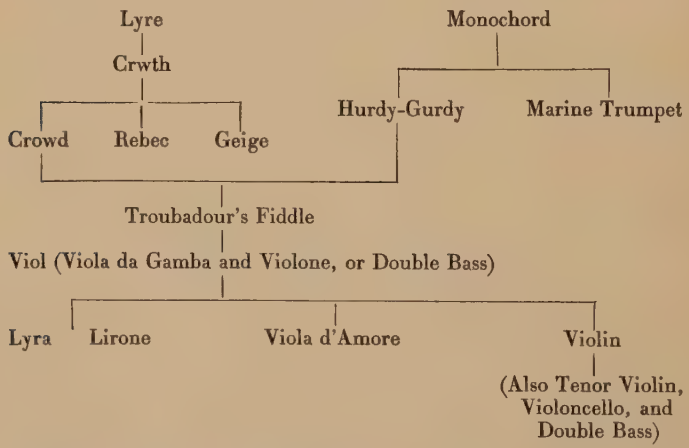
The Greeks soon out-Phœniciaed Phœnicia in their passion for beauty and their aptitude for all the arts and crafts of the day. Gold, silver, and bronze frescos of many colours, draperies delicately woven or rich and heavy,—all these were used to ornament the great houses of the native chiefs, and later the palaces of the native kings. Art grew to be a national, not an imported glory, and in the guise of exquisitely carved

and decorated lyres, and in the worship of Apollo, the bright-haired God of Song, the Heart of Music beat its soft message in ancient Greece.

The general impression seems to be that Pythagoras founded stringed music in Greece when he brought the monochord from Egypt. As a matter of fact the Greeks used the simmikon, a harp with thirty-five strings, invented by Simon a good two hundred years before the era of Pythagoras, as well as other instruments more elaborate. Terpander of Sparta, who lived about 700 B. C., is said to have created the first definite period in Greek music, and to have been a singer and composer of note. He gave the lyre seven perfect strings instead of four, thus discovering the octave. Of course the octave had been discovered in the East before this, and it is a matter open to question whether Terpander had not some Oriental lore by way of foundation when he worked out his new theories of music.

By Pythagoras and other masters the monochord was used chiefly as a factor in education. It was a vehicle for instruction, not performance, and in one sense took the place of a tuning-fork. Singing, acoustics, and a sense of pitch were taught by the aid of the monochord. The cleverer among the Greek masters perfected this primitive

little instrument to such a point that, by the help of a movable bridge which cut off aliquot parts on the one string, they could obtain all the intervals of a scale in exceptionally true tones. The Greek name for the monochord was a combination of μόνος (single) and χορδή (a string), and the instrument formed a very important factor in the education of the young Greeks. The deduction, therefore, of Edward John Payne and others, that the monochord was one of the legitimate parents of the violin, seems a little far-fetched. Mr. Payne's table of the violin's antecedents is as follows:



The theory that the harp sprang full-fledged into Greece through Eastern sources seems much

more probable. Strabo says: "Those who regard the whole of Asia, as far as India, as consecrated to Bacchus point to that country as the origin of a great portion of the present music."

There is a curious similarity in the Greek and Asiatic names for the instruments, as well as in the instruments themselves. In Greece we find the sambyke, said to have been invented by Ibykos in 540 B.C. What relation was it to the sambuka and sambouca used in Babylon, and in Nineveh and Phœnicia as well? How about the Greek pandoura, a lute with three strings, and the Oriental tamboura, also a lute with three strings? And why do we find the magadis in the Orient and also in Greece? The conclusion that all the Greek instruments were probably developed from Eastern instruments introduced by the Phœnicians is so simple and seems so obvious that no wonder the people who love theories hesitate to accept it.

There were plenty of instruments known by purely Greek names, of course. The Greeks were too inventive and artistic a race not to appropriate and improve upon any rare importation. So we have the huge Greek harp, the epigonion with forty strings; the barbiton, fashioned exactly like the Egyptian harp, which

was the instrument beloved by Sappho and Anacreon; the phorminx, the real Homeric lyre; and the peklis, fitted like the magadis with twenty strings, but giving out only ten full tones.

The Greeks made music a more conspicuous element in their daily life even than the Orientals. In war or peace, work or play, love or death, there was always music, and music of a high lyric and melodic order which it is difficult to credit across so great a distance of years.

Botsford gives a prose translation of a page of Homer which brings the spirit of the past irresistibly before us:

"There were youths dancing, and maidens of costly wooing, their hands on one another's wrists. Fine linen the maidens had on, and the youths well-woven doublets faintly glistening with oil. Fine wreaths had the maidens, and the youths daggers of gold hanging from silver baldrics. And now would they run round with deft feet exceeding lightly, as when a potter sitting at his wheel that fitteth between his hands maketh trial of it whether it run; and anon they would run in lines to meet each other. And a great company stood round the lovely dance in joy; and among them a divine minstrel was making

music on his lyre, and through the midst of them, as he began his strain, two tumblers whirled."

Even as in Egypt, we see, gymnasts, athletes, wrestlers, and jugglers went hand in hand with musicians at great festivals. We know how even late into the mediæval centuries "jongleur" stood for both juggler and singer. Aristophanes in describing a day of triumphant and over-excited feasting uses the phrase "with garlands, singing-girls, and bloody noses," which shows that even in Greece music had its place at times among the passions and extravagances of men, as with the Assyrians and Babylonians. A remnant of Chaldean superstition clings to the art of song in the record of sundry Grecian leeches who cured wounds by singing soft melodies to the accompaniment of the lyre. The blind musicians of Egypt and China are recalled by references in the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" to the old and blind minstrels delighting the multitude.

The following passage from Euripides is translated by Botsford. It is the passage in glorification of Alcestis, who died for her husband.

". . . Of thee the Muses' votaries shall sing on the seven-stringed mountain shell, and in hymns that need no harp, glorifying thee, oft as the spring in his cycle cometh round at Sparta in that

Carnean month when all night long the moon sails high o'erhead, yea, and in radiant Athens the happy town. So glorious a theme has thy death bequeathed to tuneful bards. Light lie the earth above thee, lady!"

These lines are interesting for more than one reason other than their intrinsic beauty and classical value. First, they show the path of the persistent survival of the Seven Great Tones of Egypt, as well as pointing to the existence in Greece as well as Egypt of the myth of the tortoise-shell turned by a god into a lute. Also, they proclaim the place held by lyric music in those days, showing the exalted and beautiful mission of the stringed instruments to have been the honour of noble lives and the elegy of lovely deaths.

Said one ancient Egyptian priest to a wise Greek philosopher, who had travelled to his temple on the shore of the Nile to sit at his feet and learn of him, "You Greeks are only children, talkative and vain. You know nothing at all of the past."

"But," began the philosopher, who loved his country and was proud of her cult of beauty and her heroes and her lyric art.

The Egyptian priest stopped him with a gesture, and his eyes strayed from the great temple to the

Nile, and still beyond to the divine and terrible desert, where the gods yet walked by night.

"*You have not the past,*" he said.

And the Greek was silenced.

It is true that compared with Egypt, Greece has but a little past, but what other nation ever leaped to such exquisite fulfilment in a little past as she?

And in the Greek hero songs there is something infinitely deep and stirring, something moving and vital and beautiful, that is to the measured chants of old Egypt what life is to death.

War songs were always an important feature of the military life of the Spartans and Trojans. Tyrtæus, of the Second Messenian War, wrote splendid war chants which the Spartans sang as they went into battle. They were sung in camp at meals too, and the captain rewarded the soldier who sang best with an extra portion of red meat. Alcman wrote songs of love and wine, though he too was a Spartan, and we do not usually associate the men of Sparta with much gratification of the passions or even the needs of humanity.

The rulers of ancient Greece were all more or less patrons of the arts, some names — such as Cleisthenes and Cypselus — shining down the centuries as illustrious promoters of music and

poetry. At the court of the latter was the famous poet Arion, who composed choral songs in honour of the god Dionysus, which were sung to the accompaniment of harps. It was out of these songs that the drama was evolved in its first primitive forms—later to be perfected. In this extraordinary culmination of the art sense of antiquity, the Greek drama, music played so great a part that it is safe to state that no dramatic representation ever took place in ancient Greece without its incidental music. Like the Egyptians and Chaldeans, the Greeks invested their musical compositions with subtle significances. Different keys were supposed to portray different moods, and the finely trained ear of the initiated could anticipate the character of the play to be performed from the first chords sounded upon the lyre or harp.

In the great Athenian theatre, accommodating fifty thousand people, the Greeks listened eagerly to what was real melodrama, or drama with music, the precursor of Wagner's music drama. Rockstro says that Sophocles' "Antigone" was to the Greeks what "Tristan" is to us. It was the highest dramatic and musical expression of the art mood of the day. Rockstro adds this most interesting paragraph: "We think it a great thing

that a devoted lover of art should undertake a fatiguing and expensive journey to the dullest of German towns for the sole purpose of listening to a performance of 'Parsifal' or the 'Trilogy.' And it is a great thing. But what are we to think of travellers from distant lands, who, after undertaking a long and perilous journey to Athens, took their places in the great Senecan theatre on the evening before the performance and sat there, in patient expectation, during the entire night?"

But the purest form in which the heart of music found expression was in lyric poetry, for which, among other marvels, the land grew memorable. This of course means, literally, song accompanied by the lyre, and it called into play the highest musical development of the period. The more illustrious of the lyric singers travelled from court to court, honoured and welcomed everywhere, and adding leaves to their laurel wreaths with each fresh ode, love ballad, or song of war. The names of Alcæus of Lesbos, Sappho, the Spartan Alcman, Simonides of Ceos, Bacchylides his nephew, and Pindar of Bœotia are synonymous for Greek song. They all composed lyric poetry and music of rare loveliness, and were beloved by the Greek people. Simonides was chiefly famed for patriotic songs, as those of

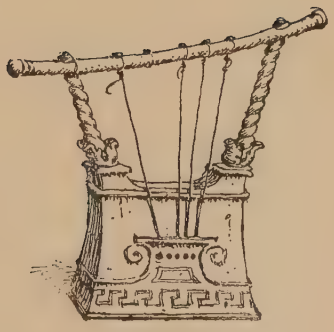
Alcæus and Sappho were given over to the praise of love and other gentle things. When the Greeks triumphed in their war with the Romans they called upon Simonides to make a song of it, and Simonides sang of the dead heroes whose lives had bought back the liberty of Greece, though then he was very old and his hand shook upon the lyre.

Music grew in time to be associated in chief with the religion of the land, and, as in the East, became the inseparable adjunct of all sacred rites and ceremonies. Apollo, Dionysus, and Orpheus were worshipped far and wide, and oracles were established among the hills. Apollo was hailed as the Great Purifier, the Great Cleanser, the Great Uplifter, and his divine message was supposed to come through song. High up among the trees and rocks of Mount Parnassus, with the purple valleys below and the sea blue in the distance, stood the Temple of Delphi, dedicated to Apollo. Volcanic fire and steam issued from a crevice within, and the Pythia, or oracle, sat there enveloped in the supposed sacred smoke and chanted or sang the will of the god.

"There on the holy tripod sits the Delphian priestess," we find in Euripides, "chanting to the ears of Hellas in numbers loud whate'er Apollo doth proclaim."

And his message seems to have been a beautiful one, inciting men to brave lives and brave deaths, to fortitude, loyalty, and knowledge, and to the worship of lovely things of mind and body alike. For a space, at least, the strings of music could vibrate to a worthy melody, could know themselves dedicated to sweet uses and fine ends. Though her prostitution was soon to recommence, Music knew her brief interval of stately welfare, worshipping the high gods and "singing the deeds of the heroes."

In Pagan Rome



"Would justice be promoted, or would they serve on the Knights' commissions for the honourable office of a judge, because they had listened with critical sagacity to effeminate strains of music and sweet voices?" — *Tacitus*.

VI. — In Pagan Rome

THE records of the past show such remarkable fluctuations in the development of music that the reasoning mind becomes apprehensive in contemplating them. As the art grows to fuller completion and perfection to-day, one fears more and more a corresponding fall, — some sudden whirl backward into the ultra-primitive, — even into the possibility of the revival of the bear's sinew and the bow! One is constrained to think this as one looks at the strange chronicle of heights and depths. First Egypt and wisdom; then Babylonia and madness; then Greece and beauty; finally Rome and decadence.

And so we come to the next stage in the unfolding of music, — an advance in importance, but a retreat in genuine value. With the tides of progress we will journey from Greece to Rome and consort with senators and ladies, emperors and slaves, in the days of the Cæsars.

The philosophers of ancient Rome appear to have held music in but low esteem. That there could be dignity in it as an art, or beauty as an influence, was a proposition inconceivable to their

judicial minds. And one can hardly marvel at this standpoint, when one sees the retrogression of the tonal craft with the rise of the empire.

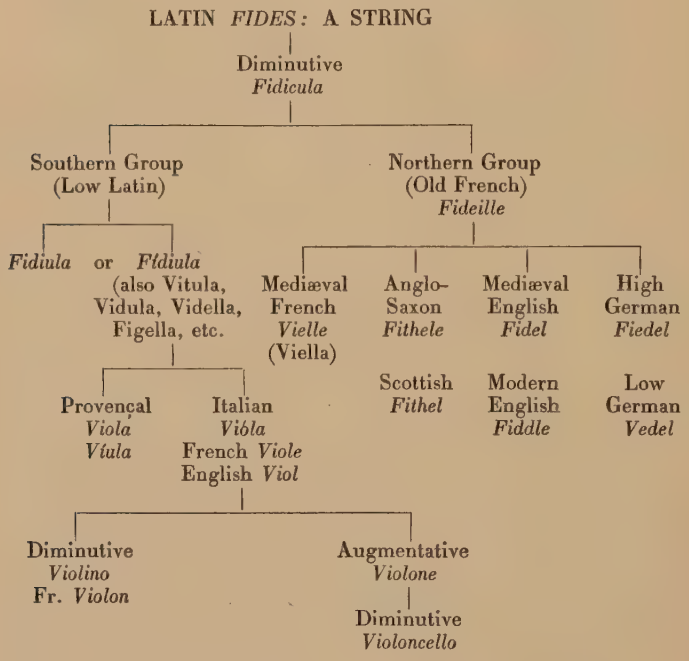
To men of wisdom and balance, albeit men essentially of their day and its limitations in outlook and prophetic perceptions, the art of song, the gift of playing on lyre and harp and lute, must be associated irrevocably with the lower elements of their period and their city. They must reasonably consider this trick of sound-making a thing fit only for the vain and brutal whims of a hero, or the excitation of a crowd of dissolute youth; for they saw it used for no other purpose. And what were they, cynical, learned men, versed in the dissection of character and the denunciation of conditions, to waste time in analysing the potentialities of an art they despised?

During the early fighting days of their magnificent history the Romans doubtless possessed fine primitive chants, crude harps, and a certain robust, if elementary, musical sense, like most young peoples. But as the civilisation of the empire grew and grew, the refinement and cultivation of the tonal art led as inevitably to its actual deterioration as the luxury and æstheticism of the nation led to its degeneracy; even

as other ancient monarchies crumbled and died in a blaze of voluptuous and ineffectual flame, — as Greece decayed to decadence, — so Rome too, most arrogant of powers, pulled rose garlands over her shirt of mail and learned to play the fidicula and lute.

This fidicula, a lyre, is generally considered the legitimate ancestor of the violin of to-day. This theory, of course, is based on the assumption that the instrument was evolved gradually in Occidental countries, and not imported from the East, as many persons believe, during the Crusades by the Moorish occupation of Spain, and through other inroads of Oriental civilisation upon Europe. The word "fidicula" of the ancient Romans was derived primarily from *fides*, a string, and meant simply an instrument with strings. It was quite an ordinary lyre, as a matter of fact, closely resembling the instruments of Egypt, Assyria, Phœnicia, and Greece. It does not seem to have been particularly remarkable either in construction or effect. Its chief value as a signboard of instrumental development is the peculiarly prominent place it held in the social and political life of Rome. There is also a certain interest in the fact that this primitive lyre, wherein there seems to have been no single

improvement or progression beyond the crude Chaldean instruments, should be chosen by so many wise persons as the recognised parent stem of the whole violin family. This theory is most clearly presented by the following table compiled by Mr. Payne:



Probably the most ignoble, but at the same time the most conspicuous era of the fidicula, was the reign of Nero. To that marvellous

monster belongs the distinction of having glorified and debased the lyric art to a height of honour and a depth of dishonour achieved by no other man. Nero built political parties around the performance of a melody, erected or blasted great houses by a song, burned a city to the sound of a fidicula. Nero set the martyrdom of the Christians to music, tortured children amid a quiver of silver tones, and sang pretty songs in harmony with the roar of the lions in the arena. Nero filled voluptuous thickets with music, and moved the fagged senses of the Roman youth with the insidious thrill of smitten lute strings. Nero made public performances of music a national business, causing the very Senate of the Imperial City to vote to him the laurel crown of song. What other man has done these things? Nero's favouritisms were largely based on some excellence in music. When he promoted Piso, the tragedian, to a higher position, it was because he could sing. "It matters not as to the disgrace," says Flabus, bitterly, "if a harp player be removed and a tragic actor succeed him."

The paradox is rather extraordinary, when one considers it soberly. In Egypt music was a great religous influence, in Assyria and Phœnicia a power for evil, in Greece an incentive to idealism,

but in Rome it was all three, and a civic force as well. The priests of Egypt used music in their ceremonies; so did the vestals of Rome. The Babylonians played on the unholy passions of men with harp tones and insinuating melodies; so did the slaves that the emperor caused to play in the floating barges loaded with naked women. The Greeks made excellence in the lyric art a high distinction; the Romans carried this to violent extremes.

The wise men of Rome, the senators and philosophers, the persons of dignity and seriousness, loathed the public exhibitions of Nero's conceit and weakness. But they were forced to see them, and worse, to applaud them.

At the harp-playing contests which the emperor organised, and in which he invariably appeared and equally invariably won, the solemnity of a religious rite accompanied the entire performance. The contestants, judges, senators, and other officiating dignitaries would file onto the stage. One by one the bards would bend the knee to the judges and the audience, all of whom were expected to applaud. "Last of all," says Tacitus, "the emperor himself came on the stage, tuning his lute with elaborate care, and trying his voice with his attendants."

The lute of Nero was not unlike the Oriental tamboura in shape. It is curious that Tacitus speaks of it, for it is not believed to have been Nero's favourite instrument. The thing that he preferred mostly and forced all men to praise was the fidicula.

Hard and fast rules were made for the song contests, most of them governing questions of deportment rather than the art itself. The minstrels could not sit during the trial. They could not clear their throats, cough, blow their noses, or wipe away a drop of perspiration. They must never forget the countless bows and gestures at fitting moments. There were great numbers of further forms and regulations of this character, none of them having the slightest connection with the music itself. The weary populace was obliged to sit through interminable hours listening to Nero and his foils play upon the lyre and lute, and watching their ridiculous formalities and ceremonious exchange of courtesies. The unfortunate Vespasian went to sleep during one of these concerts, and not only lost Nero's favour, but was insulted by Phœbes, a freed slave, into the bargain. Such was the demoralisation in the imperial audiences.

Many women of high birth, great senators, and

elderly, dignified persons of all sorts were forced by Nero to appear in theatrical performances before the public, to dance, sing, and play parts whether they were ashamed of it or not.

The use of music in the feasts and orgies of the Romans has been written of so extensively that it is hardly necessary to more than touch upon it here. At these banquets there was a great deal of Eastern music. Oriental girls, brought from Egypt and Arabia for the purpose, would play their native tamboura and sistrum and dance suggestive dances. Here was but one of the thousand ways for Eastern music to creep into the Occident.

Gibbon speaks of "the dark-skinned daughters of Isis, with drum and timbrel and wanton mein," and adds that Rome was a veritable Babel of foreign tongues, a place where every known influence for evil from every land near and far was concentrated upon the vitiating of the already demoralised spirit of the Roman people. In the streets, he continues, thronged "priests of Cybele with their wild dances and discordant cries, . . . worshippers of the great goddess Diana; barbarian captives with the rites of Teuton priests; Syrians, Jews, Chaldean astrologers, and Thessalian sorcerers."

The great historian has translated one of Ammianus Marcellinus' arraignments in two lines: "In their palaces sound is preferred to sense, and the care of the body to that of the mind."

Alas! poor "sound," poor spirit of music! so hopelessly, helplessly, indissolubly associated with all that was most vicious and useless in a day of vice and emptiness! At the great gambling bouts which Rome loved the dice was flung to an accompaniment of stringed music played by slaves and professional musicians. Wine was drunk to the measures of gay songs, and all the evil that was in a notoriously evil city seemed associated with some form of music.

To a great burst of jangled, sweeping, insistent, clamorous harmonies Rome thundered on to her downfall.

"O haughty Rome," cries the Sibylline oracle, "the divine chastisement shall come upon thee; fire shall consume thee; thy wealth shall perish; foxes and wolves shall dwell among thy ruins. And then what land that thou hast enslaved shall be thy ally; and which of thy gods shall save thee? For there shall be confusion over the face of the whole earth, and the fall of cities shall come."

One readily can conjure up scenes in plenty illustrating the muffled and broken message of the Heart of Music in those unregenerate days. Surely it beat in harmony with strange sounds then: the click of dice, the drip of wine, the pompous voices of senators and consuls, the snarls of savage beasts, the cries of tortured men, the echoes of laughter, weeping, kisses, curses, and prayers.

So music lived and throbbed, and soared and sank, in this atmosphere of paradoxes, this atmosphere of beauty and misery, feasting and suffering, solemnity and levity.

"Tear by sacred tear," says Swinburne in his description of the kneeling figure of Italy,

> "Fell from her eyes as flowers or notes that fall
> In some slain feaster's hall
> Wherein mid music and melodious breath
> Men singing have seen death!"

The Dark Days

"Soon will it be
That sickness or sword-blade
Shear thy strength from thee,
Or the fire ring thee,
Or the flood whelm thee,
Or the sword grip thee,
Or the arrow hit thee,
Or age o'ertake thee,
And thine eye's brightness
Sink down in darkness."

Ancient Chant sung by Hero Kings
to accompaniment of the Crwth.

VII. — The Dark Days

OUR next step onward shows us a curious parting of the ways so far as violin history is concerned. Hitherto the varying opinions held by learned persons regarding the origin of the queen of instruments have been more or less negative, or at least nominal, quantities. We could accept whichever we chose without leaving our direct path of research. But after the Roman era the points in question become strangely active, each requiring a separate attention and a faithful lamp of inquiry. There are three theories concerning the growth and development of the violin: the first, that it grew directly from Roman and Greek instruments, without external augmentation; the second, that it owes its debt of parentage paramountly to the crwth of the early Britons; the third, that it was introduced into Europe during the Crusades and was of frankly Oriental origin. It will be seen readily that it is necessary to consider these three propositions with uniform respect.

If we consider the first theory alone, we must confine ourselves to the region of the Roman

empire and its immediate influence and control for a space. When Rome fell, a black plague of ignorance, superstition, and wretchedness descended upon the land. We do not say that it was worse, or as evil, as the excesses of the Empire, for at least it was a fermenting time, a period of hidden growth and unseen seeding; but be all this as it may it was a muffling hand upon the clear voices of expansion and of art. For the first time since it began to beat, the Heart of Music fell silent. Not death, but a sick swooning that seemed almost death, stilled its eager pulses and hushed alike the chant of praise and the song of sin. The earth cowered and groaned in the black grip of these dark centuries. Even the historians write of them impressively — moved perhaps by a certain terror that clings there even now, after the levelling, grinding touch of time.

War, outrage, lawlessness, and brutality reduced civilisation to a primitive basis. Every one expected to be killed at any moment. Men ventured from home furtively, however honest or necessary their business, and doubtless kept an eye on a safe cover or sanctuary all the while. But, as a matter of fact, not even sanctuary was inviolate in those desperate days. Christianity was young and none

too strong in act, however puissant in spirit, against the hosts of lust and blood and darkness. Churches fell in ruins, and few cared that the altars were dust. Men were robbed and could find no redress. The system of allodial tenure did indeed give a man lands and fortress of his own, but he had no protection for the holding of them beyond his good sword and what faithful vassals he might muster. They were apt to be wrested from him in a single night by some neighbour temporarily in power.

John Lord, the historian, says that this period, extending from the fall of the Empire until the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth centuries, was the blackest and dreariest in history —there was no art, there was no literature, there was no music. Men lived beneath a deadly fear. God might be believed in by a few, the Devil must be believed in by every one. The clean, gay, wholesome things of life were forgotten in a damp, gray wretchedness. Men sang grave-chants and death-songs instead of love lays and drinking catches. The sky was dark and the future dim, and there were some who dreamed daily that the sun was never again to shine.

In the year one thousand the end of the world was prophesied, and most earnestly and abjectly

expected by the people. Although the end of the world failed to arrive, in spite of grave and not-to-be questioned portents, a great famine did. For nearly three years (1030-1032) there were no seedtimes and no harvests. Wolves came in from the forests and prowled through the streets of towns and cities. Men ate each other as they died, and even robbed graves in their mad effort to sustain life. And these things happened, remember, less than fifty years before the era of the gay troubadours.

On the continent, where the Old Empire had so long held sway, the desolation was complete. The world was dark under the contemporaneous reigns of the Saxon kings in England, but not quite so black. A certain robust element in the Anglo-Saxon vitality, a virility not to be questioned nor conquered, worked on toward a national fulfilment of strength. In Europe the spell was unbroken, a lethargy and inanition of despair locked the people, and a bitter fanaticism gripped those in authority. The roses almost forgot to bloom, and when people prayed it was only to fend off the evil spirits that were believed to throng the blackness of night with a dark and ghoulish purpose, and the magic arts of the Devil at their aid.

Robbery and piracy went in hand with hunting and legitimate fighting. Men were on a plane with animals and gratified their heinous appetites with as little hesitation as the beasts of the woods and waste-lands. In this time the mission of string music was nil, — nullified by the unproductive and unresponsive elements with which it had to combat, and over which it would have had to rise exultant to be heard at all.

"Music was only a tinkle then," say the wise ones, and yet suddenly the impossible was accomplished; the violin, most advanced of instruments, was in use, and soon was even in a fair way to its perfection. Just so no great results arrive, abruptly and sublimely, in the midst of struggles of development and exposition.

The growing power of the Christian Church was beginning to engulf music and materially to limit its scope. Chants took the place of the free folk-songs of the people, and it was considered most reprehensible to play stringed instruments. Many priests forbade all forms of music except religious intoning and the most austere and unmelodious hymns. Even the organs, which in their first primitive forms were known as the organum pneumaticum (pneumatic organ) and the organum hydraulicum (water organ), were con-

sidered purely secular instruments. Nero had possessed some of them, and they, like stringed instruments, had become associated with evil and dowered with wild records. It was not until the eleventh century that the organ was introduced into church ceremonies. Occasionally, however, some friar or prelate, like the good monk Thotilo or Notker Balbulus of St. Gall, gave up the best of his days to the development of music, and nearly all the monasteries did much toward completing and sustaining the art of musical construction and notation. It was the Heart of Music, the stringed lyricism of the world, which was shut away. That was bound to wait for another swing of the pendulum, though the pedantry and academical austerity of the very monks who condemned it were building the foundations for its future dwelling.

The first bow instruments of Southern Europe appeared in the eleventh century, played by wandering singers and some few more exalted minstrels. But meanwhile another little embryo violin had been flourishing in the North for nearly four centuries, and this fact brings us to the second theory concerning the growth of the violin.

Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, says:

"Let the Roman delight in his lyre, the barbarian in his harp,
The Greek in the lyre of his heroes, the Briton in his Chrotta."

So at a time when the Assyrians and Greeks and people of the Empire had their various stringed instruments, the Celts were not behind in musical development. It is, however, worth noting that those extraordinary people, the Phœnicians — cosmic bees carrying pollen between nations —had invaded Wales at a much earlier period and brought with them, as usual, a love for adornment and the rudiments of Eastern culture.

In the native Welsh the lyre, adopted by the Britons as their national instrument, was called crwth (pronounced *crooth*). But with the strong Roman colouring that affected all Britons so intensely, the word crwth became Latinised into chrotta. In the later records it is sometimes called the one and sometimes the other.

To the early Britons this instrument was a never failing inspiration and spur. In war the armies were always accompanied by musicians and singers, in order that, should their zeal flag, they might be played on into the battle by war-songs and clanging strings.

Diodorus Siculus says: "With instruments like lyres in their hands, the British Minstrels advanced at the head of their armies."

In those primitive, barbaric days, when existence was a battle, when every man's hand was set

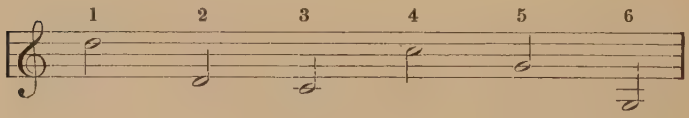
against the world, and even the elements were looked upon as conspiring enemies, music played a strange, crude, but very vital part.

Butler says, in his "Hudibras":

> "I' the midst of all this warlike rabble
> Crowden marched, expert and able."

Crowden, of course, means fiddlers, — the players of crowds or crwths.

Religion was of course pantheistic, as with all barbaric races. The Teutonic gods — Wodin, Freio, Thor, and the rest — were worshipped, as well as other even more mystical and picturesque deities — Eostre, the dawn goddess, Weland the Forger, Egil the Archer, Nicor, the shy, sly spirit of springs and pools, and Wyrd, the terrible and mysterious Woman of Death.

Giraldus Cambrensis tells us that the tuning of the crwth was as follows:

the last two strings being open. A few experimentary variations (if so they could be called!) on these three notes are very suggestive of the character of the music originally played upon this instrument. The only combinations possible are

plaintive, monotonous, and distinctly Oriental in character. The bow was triangular, and the bridge so low that it was very difficult to play without striking all the strings at once.

There are those, and no few persons either, who declare that neither the crwth nor yet its developed phœnix, which rose from its own ashes and was played with a bow throughout England, was the true ancestor of the violin. These authorities insist that the evolution of the fiddle took place in the South, not the North. But there will always be numberless sides, distinct as the facets of a diamond, to every such question.

We have now seen the evolution of the crwth from a harp to a fiddle — a rather remarkable example of development, by the by. As a rule, when an instrument changes its character it changes its name. Thus the monochord became a lyre, the pipe a trumpet, the harpsichord a piano. But the crwth remained a crwth through all its phases and manifestations, as though its individuality was too strong and insistent to be lost merely through a few changes in form and treatment. The variations from crwth to crowd and cruit and so on were purely a matter of language and inevitable dialectic changes.

Now, as a matter of fact, the persistence of the name crwth is doubly or trebly curious and interesting for these reasons. In Welsh, and the instrument was essentially Welsh in origin, the word crwth signifies "a bulging box,"—not a bad primitive description of the curving violin-body. Yet when we first meet the crwth it is in the form of a lyre. This suggests either some curious error in the old records, a coincidence in the matter of name and description, or the possibility that the crwth, when first introduced into Britain by the Phœnicians, had a hollow body and sound-board like the Egyptian nefru and nebel and the other Oriental lutes and tambouras. It would be a curious example in evolution if it were true that the crwth developed backward, as it were, into a primitive lyre before returning to its original form and the ultimate justification of its name.

These primitive Northerners were far from being without a musical system, and they were the first race in the world to have a professional organisation of musicians. The position of the "Scops" was defined by special laws in 940, made by Howel Dha, the Welsh king. These laws specified what the Scops were entitled to—it really amounted to being what they were not entitled to—and their rights and duties in general.

In 1100 Griffyd ap Cynan, Prince of Wales, ordered a congress of masters of music and presided over it himself. The congress decided that the old Welsh melodies and Druidical chants should be preserved, and a song book was made up by some of the musicians who had been present at the congress. The book was in roughest manuscript, but it contained a number of melodies which undoubtedly had been used as accompaniments to some of the mysterious ceremonies of the Druids, as well as the first harp exercises of the world.

These people, who lived and died among the dark Northern forests, by the dim lakes and spirit-haunted marshes, spent their days in communion with a thousand ghostly shapes of their own invention. They did not worship their gods in white linen like the priests of Egypt, nor on golden altars like the disciples of Ashtoroth, nor with oracles and sacred fire like the Greeks at Delphi, nor with hosts of vestals and much shameless sin like the limited collection of religious folk in Rome. They lived their daily life in the fear and reverence of the mist-shapes of their immortals. They shivered at the marsh-fire and called it the Will o' the Wisp seeking men's souls. In every stream lurked the Necker,

—the pale children of Nicor. Men hurried home through the dusk casting furtive glances backward as they went, lest the Dark God, Tiw, be at their shoulders,—Tiw, to meet with whom meant death that was swift and terrible. No people carried their mythology about with them, in intimate, childish ways, like these Northern people.

Green says that their lives were of "a Homeric simplicity and dignity." He adds further that the rough castles, coarse scenes, and elementary civilisation of these early chieftains and kings were far from being void of a rude beauty. Men and women alike possessed strength and health, and a passion for gay colours and rare jewelry. This taste was doubtless a survival of the Phœnician influences, as was the musical love of the people. In the earliest annals of England before it was England, we find that every earl—called "free necked man" and "weapon man"—had in his retinue a number of gleemen and minstrels who played the crwth and sang him songs of battle and lyric recitals of the lives and braveries of dead heroes, kings, and demigods. These chanted narratives were called hero songs and made up much of the lyric music of the time. Here is a song made by

some king just before death and well loved by his countrymen:

> "I have this folk ruled these fifty winters;
> Lives there no folk-king of kings about me
> Not any one of them
> Dare in the war-strife welcome my onset;
> Time's change and chances I have abided,
> Held mine own fairly,
> Sought not to snare men;
> Oath never swore I falsely against right,
> So for all this may I glad be at heart now,
> Sick though I sit here,
> Wounded with the death-wound."

The gleemen were only servants, of course, ever liable to be flogged to death or burned for trifling offenses, like the regular slaves of the time. They were classed with buffoons and other gamesters, and had no merit from their trade. But as a matter of fact their field was rather an extensive one, and their position infinitely preferable to that of the musicians of the gods in Egypt or the unfortunate senators and patricians who learned to play the fidicula and lute in Rome. They had a certain independence of action, born of the very freedom and wildness of the times, and they were privileged to minister to human passions and impulses, to love and hate and desire for war — not merely to please the gods, gratify voluptuous senses, or flatter vanity.

Some of their poetry was fine in character, for instance the line in one of the gleeman's songs, "The rush of the host, and the crash of the battle line," and such phrases, descriptive of a ship at sea, as "the wave floater," "the foam-necked," and "the bird on the swan road of the sea." And from the very ancient chronicles we imagine that the music of the crwth which accompanied all their songs was no less fine in quality and stirring in effect. As has been said, the Celtic name for the gleeman was Scop, and so the minstrels were called until a late day. In 940 A.D. they were still known as Scops, and still played the crwth. It, by the by, bore many names besides crwth and chrotta. It was also known as crowd, rotta, and rota in Britain. In France, where it travelled later on, it was called the rote and crout. The Teutons knew it as rotte, and the Irish had two names for it,—cruit and clarseach.

The first specific mention of it which we have is in the Bishop of Poitiers' legacies, which were written in 609. How old it was then it would be difficult to estimate, but it could hardly have been of very recent adoption by the Britons to be already associated with them by song and reputation as strongly as was the lyre with the Romans and the harp with the barbarians. The

earliest pictures show it to be a "crwth trittant," or lyre with three strings, but later it grew into possession of six.

It was first played like all lyres, resting on the left shoulder and plucked with both hands. In this form it was very primitive indeed, without stops or other method of tuning. When the holes for stopping were added, a slender piece of wood was introduced into the centre of the instrument, just back of the strings, forming a keyboard. The strings, which had been dispersed over the square frame, were drawn closer together. First this was done only at one end, leaving the strings stretched in the shape of a fan. Then both were brought into balance, and the frame was changed to suit the new requirements of convenience and resonance. The instrument, instead of being square, had become oblong. It now had stops, a sound-board, and six strings. Four of these ran over the finger-board, the two others lay closer to the wood. When the instrument was played by the hand, or possibly the plectrum, this arrangement of strings fitted easily into the hand, the thumb manipulating the two lower strings.

When in the seventh century the bow was applied to it, thus creating the first bow instrument

of Europe, the four strings stretched over the finger-board were used to sustain the melody, the two side-strings being plucked in staccato accompaniment to the music made by the bow. The bow was strung with a cord or string probably at first, for it was hardly before the thirteenth century that horsehair was used for stringing the bow.

How, when, or why the bow was invented will always remain a mystery. It is strange that in all the misty labyrinth of musical history nothing is more elusive than this small detail in the development of the queen of instruments, the Heart of Music. Many persons deny that the evolution of the crwth had anything at all to do with the progress of the violin. These persons insist that the violin grew in Stats and that its ancestry was all Oriental, and that its phases of embryotic evolution ran through wandering minstrels straying into Southern Europe in the days of the First Crusade.

In any case we must leave the crwth in Britain and travel across the blue water to see what is developing in connection with this last theory. Is it possible that already we hear the Heart of Music beat to a swifter, surer measure, knowing that the time grows short and shorter before its gracious fulfilment to itself?

With Rebeck & Viol

"Some of them were playing Harps, others blowing Bagpipes, others twanging Lutes, others playing Pipe and Lute together, others tuning up their Rebecks. And Sets of Bells were ringing, and Trumpets braying, and Drums roaring. There were Symphonies, Psalteries, Shawlms, Monochords, all playing at once. There were Gitterns, Regals, Viols, Cymbals, Tabors, Dulcimers, Flageolets, Nabelles, Emmoraches, Micamons, Naquaires, Douceines, Mouscordes, — all these were the Minstrels playing. And some were telling stories, and others were making verses." — *From Old Latin poem, by Americus de Pergrato.*

VIII. — With Rebeck and Viol

In the eighth century bands of gypsy players began to appear throughout Europe, — singers and musicians from the East with lyres and lutes of Assyrian and Persian make. They mingled with the survivals of the Roman lyric craft and created a new class, — the class of jongleurs or minstrels. Anathematized by the Church, they nevertheless led merry lives enough in spite of many hardships. Their music was quickly seized upon by the impressionable Latin populace, though the smallness of their number and the absence of influential favour prevented them from taking any really very definite place in the musical history of the time.

The feudal system was the only protection for minstrels, as it was for most lowly folk. Those of them who were very fortunate were engaged by barons and lords and kept in their castles for the amusement of the family and possible guests. A chronicler of remote time enumerates the household of a typical feudal lord as including "the feudal family, the chaplain, the leech, the visiting strangers of rank, the servants of varying

degrees, the bards, the minstrels, and the other play-folk."

John Lord, the historian, insists that the feudal system was not at all the lamentable institution that persons have considered it; that it had many fine points as a balancing, equalising factor, a determining force in the relative values of men and of conditions, and a natural expression, as it was a fitting fulfilment, of the peculiar needs of the day.

Its bearing upon our present subject lies in the fact that it protected and encouraged a certain form of spontaneous lyric song which otherwise might have died or become hopelessly corrupted and prevented the longer popular usage. From the beginning of the feudal system, in the year 800, until the First Crusade in 1095, music was divided into two forms: the church form, which was almost purely vocal and strictly Gregorian, and the light, secular form, which consisted of the most trivial of popular songs and ballads that had been sung by strolling minstrels since the fall of the Roman empire. Between these two extremes of tonal expression existed nothing, for it was an age of contrasts.

Justin Smith says: "Appalling crimes could ride side by side with amazing virtues, and com-

plete self-renunciation follow close on the heels of unmeasured self-indulgence. The watch-night for the dead was given up to laughter and orgies. Wild songs and pious hymns were sung at Christmas to the same airs, — the hymns so heavenly that it seemed as if the sky must open, the songs often so indecent that, according to Gascoigne, a certain worthy man died of mortification because he could not forget them!"

Then came the Crusades in the eleventh century, and a mighty step was taken in the history of stringed music. According to the best historical authorities the Crusaders were worse than the people upon whom they waged their unrelenting war. They not only burned, and sacked, and massacred, and looted more barbarously than the Saracens; they acquired all the looseness and vice of the East and improved on them, accruing to themselves all the worst and little of the best of the futile Oriental spirit. It is said that they danced to the sound of Arabian instruments and made love to singing-girls under the very walls, doom-freighted and terrible, of tragic Acre.

When they returned they were not only demoralised, but demoralising. They brought great armies of strolling players and musicians in their train. So, in spite of their many sins against

justice and purity of heart, we owe them a colossal debt, — the bow instrument. For it is fair to assume that the greater number of these new forms of stringed instruments reached us in this fashion — ignobly, with the light, loose folk who followed the Knights Templars and the crusading warriors back to Europe.

Thus, with the Crusaders came a new fire and melody into the violent and dark world of the eleventh century. The music of the East, passionate, spirited, and infinitely appealing, the music which already had slipped into Europe in shy, secret fashions, poured flood-like through Christendom on the heels of the returning Knights, bearing memories of august, burned-out faiths, and a thousand poignant racial challenges. The open road beaten by the crusading armies between the East and West was the open road for the bow instrument's entrance into European civilisation. As Rowbotham says: "The love of Arabian minstrelsy, the traditions of Arabian music, were thus enabled to pass in a steady stream into a land eminently calculated to give them welcome."

The full value of this can only be appreciated by the music lover when he realises that there were already in Arabia and the neighbouring Eastern countries twenty-nine kinds of stringed

instruments, fourteen of them being bow instruments of the violin form. These instruments, of course, had grown into being from the revanastron, and were of varying degrees of finish and tone.

The two best known to musical historians are the rebab and the kemengeh. Both of these instruments were played with one end supported by a slender rest upon the ground, both were played with a bow, and both started with one string only. The rebab is the more perfect of the two, having a larger or more resonant body, a shorter neck, and a shape better adapted generally to the best tonal effect.

The Moorish invasion of Spain brought all manner of new elements into the Occidental world. Although we are told by certain authorities that the Moors had no lasting influence upon Spanish music, it is impossible to believe that the occupation of the Orientals did not carry with it some very definite traces of the art which was the very breath of life to the people of the East.

Now when the rebeck came into Spain it passed by Italy — some day to be the cradle as the coronation-throne of the Heart of Music. It had already led a truly precarious existence in Southern France and the Basque country for many

years, but the full flood-tide of its power did not reach Spain until the twelfth century.

It was in the thirteenth century that the Church in Spain, becoming scandalised at the dissolute hands and unseemly uses into which the rebeck and its brethren had fallen, forbade it to be played or listened to by any good Catholics. It was hereafter to be reserved for the holy rites of the Church itself. Perhaps they hoped to purify its mission through the atmosphere of devotion, or perhaps they burned to develop its possibilities in peace and quiet, undisturbed and unprofaned by secular interference, or perhaps they merely wanted the best of this world, whether food or learning, wine or culture, music or amusement, for themselves. Be that as it may, the rebeck and its fellows passed out of the hands of the common folk and for a brief space lived a virtuous life in the cloister.

But the people were not to be so easily cheated of their merry stringed music; they loved it far too well to relinquish it without a struggle. Since the Church would not permit them to play a rebeck they cast about in their minds for a method to circumvent the Church and to agree to its dictum while doing what they pleased.

The essential peculiarity of the rebeck consisted in the fact that it was played with a bow.

Remove the bow and your rebeck was not a rebeck. This simplified the problem of the populace that happened to be bent on gay stringed music. The bow was abandoned, and the rebeck, shorn of its distinguishing factor, became a rebeck no longer. Its shape became slightly, very slightly altered, and in its new form it was known as a mandolin, mandolina, or mandola, — a sort of modified lute dearly beloved by the Spanish people. In its larger form it was the guitar which has endured to this day.

It was in this form that it travelled back to Italy, — once passed in its hasty journey, — and before its wonderful upward flight to perfection.

When the rebeck became a mandolin and guitar, and journeyed into Provence to be given a bow again, and was rechristened the guitar fiddle, just such another contradictory evolution took place as we have seen in the fortunes of the crwth. That instrument, we may remember, evoluted backward and became a lyre *after* it had been a "bulging box," and then turned all the way around and became a bulging box again, after all. This eccentric way of doing things, however, seems to have been confined to the instruments of Spain. For the French bow instruments never went into disuse, and they went on no pilgrim-

age either. Even the crwth had forgotten its wild ways, and now, most utterly meek, sober, and unpretending, awaited its turn in the dance of strings.

There is yet another stringed instrument of mediæval days which we must consider as a possible evangel of the violin, if not an actual ancestor. This is the curious and unique instrument known as the tromba marina, marine trumpet, trumscheidt, tympanischiza, and nonnen-geige (nuns' violin). It came from Germany originally, where it was immensely popular, especially among the nuns of various convents, notably those of Marienstern, near Camenz, and Marienthal, near Ostritz. Both of them were situated in Saxony, proverbial for its music-loving folk. The nuns of these cloisters still use the marine trumpet, making it a striking feature in the initiation ceremonies of each novice who comes to take the veil. They usually play them in quartet form, as the greater number of the instruments have but one string; one plays the melody, the other three tones forming the harmonies. Some of the old marine trumpets had several strings, and very good bridges. More than one authority insists that it was one of the earliest of all bow instruments; it certainly fathered the geige, or

German violin, and probably, together with the lute, inspired the first violin makers to the progress and consummation of their craft.

So we see that in all parts of the European world the violin was growing to completion: in England and France they had the crwth, rebeck, and viol, as well as other more primitive instruments; in Spain the mandolin and guitar, later developed into the guitar fiddle beloved by the troubadours, and in Germany the marine trumpet and lute. It is a question which of these instruments progressed most rapidly, but the writer is inclined to believe that this distinction belongs to the British crwth, though it was in Provence that the big "troubadours' fiddle" was first used.

Strangely enough it is in that curiously independent little instrument, the crwth, that we first find most of the distinguishing changes and developments in violin growth. The bow, to begin with, was applied to the crwth, as we have seen, before any other European instrument. Of characteristic and advanced fiddle appendages there remain the bridge, the sound post, the sound holes, the bass bar, the curved-in-waist, and the corner-blocks. Some of these were more or less established before the era of the crwth,

and none of them were perfected until much later, but we find in this Northern instrument a surprising progress in distinctive features, a progress and improvement beyond that of the contemporaneous instruments of the South.

The ribible, fidel, and hurdy-gurdy are all English branches of the primitive fiddle. They are spoken of constantly in old poems and chronicles, as, too, are the videls of Germany. The Nibelungenlied refers to the twenty-four videlars of Etzel, richly dressed and starting on a message of importance to Burgundy. They brought back with them, it may be remembered, the famous fiddler Volker, "who," says the old historian, "could do as much with his fiddle as another man with the broadsword."

Chaucer speaks of Absolon, who "could play tunes on a small ribible," and wrote of the Oxford Clerk:

> "For him had lever have at his beddes hed
> A twenty bokes clothed in black and red,
> Of Aristotle and his philosophy
> Than robes rich, or Fidel, or Sautrie."

The literature of England is especially rich in reference to the fiddle, — the rebeck, rebible, or *rowbyble*, as it is called in Old English.

Many of us know the gay young clergyman of Edward II's time, who did ". . . Ratyl on the

rowbyble, and in none other bookes!" And while we are on the subject of gay young clergymen, Bourdelot tells a story of a young priest of his acquaintance who was late to his Good Friday service. When two friends went in search of him they found him dancing about his room, and at the same time playing most infectious melodies upon his violin. He explained that he always did this before a service, as it cheered and strengthened him "for what," in his own words, "would otherwise be a work of pain and labour."

The term "fiddling parson" was for many years one of the bitterest opprobrium, probably because of the deserved ill-repute into which the viol fell during one long period in its career. In 554 Childebert was obliged to institute legal measures, in France, for the suppression of the evil uses to which music was put, and although matters were a trifle better in England, the Middle Ages did not add to the lustre of the fair fame of stringed instruments.

Public opinion was affected, also, by the luckless fate of a certain parson who was fiddling to his parishioners on the village green. The weather was clear and the villagers were dancing. Out of the blue sky came a flash of lightning and

killed *that* "fiddling parson" where he stood, — and smashed his fiddle, too.

The art of music-making was still confined to the two opposing classes, — the monks and the wandering players. It had not yet been taken up by the knight troubadours and made the mediæval fashion. That movement was the outcome of the Spanish stricture against bow instruments, — a stricture which sent music-loving knights and lords into the Basque country and Provence, preferring exile and a precarious livelihood to safe housekeeping without the viols that they loved.

These men were the later, higher development of the jongleurs, who had for so long controlled all secular music. These jongleurs, whose name was a mere variant of joglars or jugglers, composed the theatrical profession of the Middle Ages. They were the teachers of such young daughters of feudal lords as might chance to be lyrically ambitious. They amused the priests and the guests of these same feudal lords, and helped to pass dull evenings for the inmates of isolated castles. They were the joy of the villagers of the market place, where they combined music with contortionists' feats, dancing, and story-telling.

Says one amazed looker on of a clever jongleur: "He folds himself, and unfolds himself, and in unfolding himself he folds himself!"

They sang narratives, wrestled, tumbled, jumped through hoops, begged, fiddled, tossed knives, exhibited animals, and even acted as messengers in intrigues and advertisers of strange nostrums. Every jongleur was expected to play at least nine instruments, as well as to know every trick, joke, and device for amusing a captious audience.

"Learn, my good Jongleurs," advises Girard Calanson, the troubadour, "to act well, to speak well, and to extemporise rhymes well. Learn how to string the Viol with seventeen chords, to sound the Bells, and to compose a Jig that shall enliven the sound of the Psaltery. A Jongleur ought to prepare nine instruments of ten chords, and if he learns to play well on them they will furnish him with ample melody."

The doctors or wise men of mediæval times retained a truly Chaldean belief in music as a medicinal or curative factor. They also considered it possessed of magical or supernatural qualities,—again like the Chaldeans,—and employed it in all sorts of curious ways,—to

exorcise demons, cure insanity, charm animals, and a variety of other strange uses.

"The aspic is the serpent that guards the balsam," wrote Armand de Villeneuve, the learned doctor. "When a man wishes to gather balsam, he puts the aspic to sleep with the music of stringed instruments, and thus secures the balsam; and when the aspic sees how it has been tricked, it stops one ear with its tail, and rubs the other on the ground, till it also is stopped. Then it cannot hear the music any more, and so it keeps watch."

More picturesque even than the jongleurs were the jongleuses, or gleemaidens, the girl minstrels who travelled about alone or with companies of players, and sang their songs to the accompaniment of crwth, rebeck, or viol, and danced to the measure of their own music. Some of these gleemaidens took dancing bears about with them. The animals were trained to stand upon their hind legs and dance as soon as the first bars of music were played. "The bears would dance with the gleemaidens," says one old book, "who sang the song of the dance with most melodious voices; and the bears would dance with them, putting their great paws in their pretty hands, and footing step by step quite correctly the

measure of the dance, growling contentedly the while."

Adeline was the name of one of the more famous of the young gleemaidens in the eleventh century. She received an estate from William the Conqueror for her musical skill. Melior was another, and a third was Josiane, who sang before St. Bevis of Southampton. Marie de France, the lyrical Bretonne, was the jongleuse of William Longsword, son of Henry II and Fair Rosamond.

The jongleurs were outlaws, with neither franchise, privilege of legal protection, nor right of redress. If a man insulted a minstrel, the latter could not resent it; no reputable citizen would enter into a quarrel with him, and the poor musician could only claim satisfaction by *striking at the offender's shadow!* If a man murdered a jongleur there was no legal penalty. Says Rowbotham: "The murder was not of a man, but of a minstrel,—a being beyond the pale of any law."

To protect each other, since the law refused them its offices, the musicians of England formed a guild or union, and met, four and five hundred strong, at various appointed meeting-places,—sometimes at Chester, sometimes York, sometimes

Beverley, Canterbury, or Dutton. John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, gave the English minstrels a charter granting them the right to appoint a minstrel king, who should have full control over them, in lieu of the ordinary legal restrictions and protection. In the fourteenth century we find Richard II giving John Caroney the musician a passport in which the bearer is described as "Rex Ministrallorum Nostrorum (The King of our Minstrels)." Walter Haliday, another music maker, was so far recognised as to be awarded by the Crown eighteen marks (about five dollars) a year for his skill! This munificent generosity was sufficiently rare to be recorded in more than one chronicle; and as a matter of fact the singers of songs and players of viols received but little recognition or encouragement in those days from the powers that were.

It was from these men, despised, outlawed, unprotected, and unprivileged, that the violin came to us at last. From the beginning of time, as we have seen, music was unhonoured; the place of musicians was with the buffoons, the dogs, not even with the servants, so low was their estate. We know this was true in Egypt and the other ancient nations; we find the conditions unchanged in mediæval France and England, Spain and

Germany. So these jongleurs, minstrels, gleemen, menestriers — what you will — lived in a world apart, a world wherein only their comrades and their instruments were to be found, and from which the outer, colder, mocking earth folk were safely shut.

There is an old song which seems to bring them before us, the merry, pitiful glee folk, and naïvely to enter a plea for them in their lives of weary jollity:

"Ye Joglars in ye Markette Playce,
They quippe and trippe with ympishe grayce;
They playe ye Rebecke and ye Viol,
And feare nor Singing Bout nor Trial;
They laugh, and sing, and dance a-payce,
Ye Joglars in ye Markette Playce.

"Yet times I ask me if the Rayce
Of hurried Life weigh not a spayce,
Ye Laughter and ye Song grow sadde,
Ye Hearte be drear that once was gladde.
Pitye, deare Saintes, their weary Cayse,
Ye Joglars in ye Markette Playce!"

The Troubadour's Fiddle

Spring and the nightingales in chorus singing,
And all the blue violets that wake in May,
Sweet invitation to my soul are bringing
That I sing with them their soft song to-day.
One lay I know, among all songs and psalms,
God, ere for yon burning East I depart,
Grant that I may once hold her within my arms,
Who in her breast keeps my heart.

Most sweet is she, yet hath she strange powers
For dealing hurt direr than wounds in war,
Her face of sunshine, and her lips of flowers,
Her eyes of heaven, and her smile of stars,
These be the darts by which she took me slave,
Wounded am I, and have no strength to rise:
Happier I with this wound that she gave
Than healèd by another's eyes.

Translation of song by French troubadour of the Middle Ages.

IX.—The Troubadour's Fiddle

"THE troubadour's fiddle" is rather a movable quantity. Some persons declare it is derived from the trumscheidt, others from the Spanish guitar (the bowless rebeck), and others from the crwth; probably it owes its parentage to a blend of all three as well as sundry side-stocks of foreign, mayhap Oriental, blood. Without doubt the "troubadour's fiddle," whatever it was, was the direct predecessor of the violin. The troubadours created musical taste among the well-born and rich classes, and with the growth and spread of their art and its popularity, the demands of the public reached out even farther and higher toward a perfect instrument to be a fit medium and interpreter for the new and lovely craft. It seems clear, as has been stated here before, that the crwth leaped ahead more swiftly and surely than any other instrument in that day of changes, developments, and achievements.

In the course of time the knights and lords of Southern Europe adopted the lyric art as their own and learned to play on the lute and rebeck

(sometimes called viol even then!) and to sing soft songs to the fair ladies of their choice.

The bridge, of course, in primitive forms had existed since the days of early Greeks and doubtless had come to them from the East. But the bridge which the English gleemen placed upon the crwth is said by most authorities to have been a singularly good one. Moreover it was in the crwth that those two important and essential things, the sound-post and the bass bar, were first introduced. The latter appeared first. It was found as the belly of the crwth was made of thinner and finer wood, and the tension of the strings increased to meet the new demands for resonance, that the weight of the strings, tuned as tightly as they were, tended to bend and even to crush the belly of the instrument. So a strip of wood was inserted just under the C string, a long and narrow bar which acted as a support and strengthener to the whole fiddle front. This led to the introduction of the sound-post, which the French call "l'ame" or "soul," and the Germans "stimme" or "voice," of the violin. The bass bar supported one side of the instrument only, the sound-post was put in to strengthen the other side. The right leg of the bridge was simply elongated down through the body of the

crwth and fastened to the back. It was soon discovered that this simple device for mechanical precaution had increased the musical qualities of the crwth doubly and trebly. Sound-holes had existed for a long time in all stringed instruments, but their primitive form had been round cavities just under the strings, instead of curved slits to admit air and let out sound. Even this seems to have started not so much with a scientific desire to improve the instrument as a fantastic imagery involving the change from the hole shaped like the full moon to two shaped as crescents.

The jongleurs and troubadours had forced the crwth, rebeck, viol, marine trumpet, and other bow instruments into such popularity that improvements upon the violin form were inevitable. There grew a greater and greater demand for resonance, and in order to please the public, the fiddle makers made larger, stronger instruments, until they were nearer violas and violoncellos than violins. With the increasing size of the instrument it became more and more difficult to reach the strings with the bow without lifting the bridge to an absurd distance. Therefore some clever fiddle maker made a waist for the instrument, curving the body in on either side, that the bow might be operated with ease upon each or all of

the strings at will. The corner blocks, Mr. Payne and others are inclined to believe, came from Germany and not until the fifteenth century. They were directly the outcome of a desire to strengthen the instrument for the increasing strain of tense strings, and probably were first introduced by one of the famous old lute-making families of Saxony, like the Tieffenbrückers or their forerunners.

The first troubadour who achieved any sort of fame, or left any illustrious record behind him, the first swallow of the long Troubadour's Summer, which lasted from 1096 (about the time of the First Crusade) to 1294, was Guillaume de Poitiers, ninth Duke of Aquitaine, born in 1071. Whether or not he played the viol, however, is not known. He is only described as being skilled in the lute and lyre. This too is true of Regnault de Coucy, Bernart de Ventadorn, "Adenés li Rois," Bertrand de Born, and the rest of the melody makers of those first dim days in lyric history.

When the Church's edict became enforced in the thirteenth century in Spain, many of the Spanish troubadours travelled into France and Italy and became wandering players. With his viol on his back and a good nag beneath him, the troubadour journeyed from town to town and

castle to castle, jesting, singing, and making love indiscriminately to the innkeeper's daughter and the wife of the feudal lord. The two classes of minstrels were very definitely divided, — the high-born troubadour and the ragged jongleur, — but they were both adventurers, depending on their musical skill and their mother wit for their next meal and a night's lodging. Their audacity was their stock in trade, whether directed against priest or baron, comrade or sweetheart.

"My nag is a better Christian than you, and I will prove it," declared a merry jongleur to one of the heretic sect of Albigensians, the while he scraped his rebeck diligently for the monk's distraction. "You drink no wine; neither does he. You eat no meat; neither does he. He does not even eat bread. You are badly lodged; he is worse. You deny the articles of faith; my nag, on the contrary, though he does not believe, does not oppose the faith nor deny the truth; so you see he has the advantage of you both as to faith and as to works!" And he ended with a flourish of notes and a wave of his bow.

Even such a gentle singer as Raimbaut de Vaqueiras had to be reproved by the lady of his adoration with the following quaintly recorded remonstrance: "Mountebank, your effrontery

amazes. If you cannot get on without my love, you will freeze to death this winter!"

Raimbaut, by the by, was one of the first "fiddlers" of history. Although his instrument was far from being a violin, it was a very excellent viol and as dear to his heart as the Stradivarius instrument is to the master of to-day. When, in his journey through Lombardy, he encountered bleak hospitality at the hands of that notoriously miserly people and, says the story, was forced to sleep in stable and in huts with but half a roof, the driest corner was always reserved for his viol. *He* might catch cold with impunity, but the rain would forever kill the voice of his beloved instrument, — which was not only his companion, but his bread winner.

It must have been after some such experience as this that he wrote his famous song beginning

> "A man forges cold iron
> Who thinks he can make a gain without a loss."

The Marquis of Malespina laughed at Raimbaut, calling him a "fiddler," or "player of viols," — a term of reproach in those days. But the tables were turned when the two men were present at a banquet given by Biatritz de Montferrat, with whom they were both in love. Raimbaut was sad and dreamy, but there appeared "two joglars

from France," says the chronicle, "who played an *estampida* [a gay air intended for dancing] most merrily upon their rebecs."

Raimbaut aroused himself from his melancholy and composed so dainty and charming a song to the melody which had been played, elaborating the theme with such skill and delicacy upon his own viol, that Malaspina was confounded and the heart of the lady was moved at last.

Raimbaut, in whom the violinist's soul was keen, even though his instrument was inadequate, died gallantly in the Crusades, having carried his beloved viol even into Palestine, by way of comfort and help.

Then there was Folquet de Marseila — cynic, scoffer, adventurer, even villain, more or less; but brilliant beyond most men. Folquet, too, was a "player of viols" and a rare musician. He had much to do with establishing the tuning system of the viols and rebecks of his day. Viols were tuned in the seven requisite modulations of the five strings to make an octave, — four principal and four secondary tones, the lowest string giving a tone that was merely the octave, or doubling of the treble string. It was harsh in itself, but quite effective as a support to the higher and purer note of its octave. In shape the viol was

very much like our violin, only of course much larger, heavier, and clumsier. Its bow was a cumbersome article, awkward to hold and lying weightily upon the strings. It was very curved in shape, being made of a stick of flexible wood with a crotch in one end. The strand of horse-hair was tied in a thick knot at one end, and this knot was pushed into the crotch when the minstrel wanted to play, and when he was through, taken out to make the bow easier to carry. But more of the viol and its several varieties later on.

Sometimes the viol and rebeck were played with a wheel instead of a bow. The method was rather ingenious and interesting, A small wheel was inserted under the strings, without touching them. To this wheel was attached a pivot, and a crank which the player turned with his left band, the wheel revolving just underneath the strings. It was almost always resined thickly and had the additional quality of friction from the rapid rotation. With the right hand the musician pressed different strings down upon the edge of the whirling wheel, the contact giving forth a shrill buzzing or humming noise most difficult to describe, — and remarkably effective when a staccato touch was required. Many of the stringed instruments of the Middle Ages were

played with a wheel, and by many persons it was preferred to the bow; the latter being infinitely more clumsy and difficult to manipulate, and, in that shape of development, not greatly superior as a tone-producer.

Gaucelm Faidit was one of the first viol players of any standing or reputation. He was the favourite of Richard Cœur de Lion, and the most irresistible adventurer and universal lover that ever played nuns out of their cloisters and deniers out of reluctant pockets.

There were many other "players of viols" — that jolly Falstaffian prelate, the "Merry Monk of Montaubon," and the "Sappho of Provence," that fragile, dream-filled, mysterious Countess of Dia whose songs made a music in the ears of men that was not to be forgotten, and that strongly influenced all subsequent Provençal lyrics. But their name is legion, — the troubadours of the South, — and with every year they gained in numbers as they gained in skill.

In Spain the knights learned the craft of music before the nobles of almost any other country, and were renowned through many lands as rare music lovers. And their presence in Provence meant a great leap ahead of the popularity of lyrical and instrumental music.

Provence was a place of shrewd men and witty women. Not for nothing had they such proverbs as the following: "A man's shadow is worth a hundred women"; "To lie well is a talent, to lie ill a vice"; "One half the world laughs at the other half"; "Praise the sea, but stay on dry land"; "Water spoils wine, carts spoil roads, women spoil men."

When the foreign troubadours came riding down the spring woodways, blowing soft trumpet calls at their castle gates, and making love to their fair ladies with a tender look and a song half ended, the bluff hunting and hawking lords bethought themselves that here were enemies against their domestic peace; enemies who fought not in the open and could be met and conquered, but on their own, poetic, mist-silvered ground. Thus it was, says the story, that the Provençal knights took music for their own and raised it to heights unprecedented, creating out of it an art which made the troubadours of Provence echo sweetly down the centuries. And it was they who gave the Spanish guitar its bow, who seized the crwth or cruit and improved upon it, who assimilated the best of Eastern and Teutonic music, and who, by their eager requirements

and exacting demands, erected a wonderful standard for bow instruments, and indirectly called into being the rare and exquisite instruments which came to Tieffenbrücker and Dardelli in their dreams.

Further Adventures of the Viol

"In former days we had the violin,
Ere the true instrument had come about;
But now we say, since this all ears doth win,
The violin hath put the viol out!"

X. — Further Adventures of the Viol

THE interest which the violin student, even the violin lover, must feel in the viol above all other embryotic fiddle forms can hardly be overestimated. The reader will readily appreciate this fact if he be first taught to differentiate between such primitive instruments as the rebeck, rebab, vielle, hurdy-gurdy, trumpet marine, "troubadour's fiddle," and others (to which the name "viol" is far too indiscriminately applied by fictionists and historians alike) and the genuine viol. This instrument is only one step behind the violin, and indeed the exact point of division is a debatable line, never to be quite settled, probably, by the authorities on the subject. So close is the relationship that any layman might be pardoned for seeing in an advanced viol and early violin the likeness of sisters rather than that of mother and daughter.

The very dubiousness of this period of violin history, the very delicacy of touch and discrimination of selection that are required, make it peculiarly fascinating. The exact points that render two instruments respectively a viol and a

violin, instruments that were, perhaps, produced in the same year, with much the same shape, and many other corresponding likenesses, must delight even the cursory student of so elusive and evanescent a subject.

Of course we are immensely helped by the fact that "violin" is a contraction or corruption of "violino" or "little viol." Yet this is far from being as conclusive as would seem certain on the face of it. Many viols are small and delicate in tone. Nor are the number of strings an unfailing guide. To be sure, most viols have five, six, or seven strings, but some have four; many very primitive instruments, like lyres and developed monochords and tamboura, have three and four strings. Nor does the tuning help much. The majority of viols were tuned in thirds and fourths; but that some of them must have been tuned in fifths, like modern violins, is indicated by the fact that this was true of the crwth and many much more elementary instruments.

Experts, authorities, and the unescapable connoisseur could doubtless give you a dozen or twenty points of departure. I am personally interested in none of them. The very uncertainty delights me, and the conviction that the difference between a viol and a violin is something psychical,

alchemic, and mystical is infinitely more satisfying to me than the commonplace credence of a whole encyclopædia full of pleasantly convincing and utterly unexciting facts.

Perhaps because so perfect a thing as the violin could flower from no one direct tree line, the varieties and side developments of the viol family are legion. Most of them seem to have been grafted on Italian soil.

I have already submitted the old theory that the bow instrument went to Spain, passing Italy by completely, and not returning until many years later, with the rise of the troubadours' power. This doubtless is the case, —one certainly does not dare to question the word of the wise; but one is amazed to find how quickly the newly imported viol grew in Italy, gaining in less than a century (if the learned men speak truth) from twelve to fifteen variations. It is odd, too, that the country longest neglected in the sowing of the seed should eventually be the richest in harvest.

Kerlino, or Gerlino, of Nüremberg, as we shall discover later, is credited with introducing viols into Italy. Tieffenbrücker, Dardelli, Da Salò, and others developed the making of them into an art; which of them made the first violin is, as has been said before, a debatable question.

The viol was developed directly from the vielle, and had four distinct variations, each one of which was developed in several clearly defined directions. These four variations were as follows:

First, the treble or descant viol, which was the smallest form, and corresponds to a rather overgrown violin. Second, the tenor, which was sometimes termed the viola da braccio in the old days. Third, the bass (or viola da gamba); and fourth and last, the double bass, known then as the violone, which has remained unchanged in form, though it has become improved in quality, up to the present day.

Perhaps the viol best known to us to-day, by constant allusion in fiction and poetry, and even through its introduction in certain modern compositions, is the viola d'amore. This was a form of tenor viol, which was particularly popular with ancient buyers, and which is most effective in orchestras of to-day, when used for a solo against a lighter stringed accompaniment. It has seven strings with stops, and an arrangement of *sympathetic strings*, of steel or brass, which run under the regular strings, passing through holes near the bottom of the bridge, and which are tuned to the scale of D. They are usually chromatically

tuned, in which case there are at least seventeen sympathetic strings to the seven ordinary ones. They are usually not tuned by pegs, like the others, but are fastened to small nails or "wrist pins" and attached to the lower part of the peg-box. One variety of the viola d'amore was called by Leopold Mozart the "English violet," for no other reason, seemingly, than that no instrument of the sort was ever made, nor probably ever played, in England.

Attilio Ariosti, a Dominican monk, born in 1660, was a skilful performer on the viola d'amore, and played it as a solo in Handel's "Amadis" in London. Bach, also, employed this and other forms of viols in his scores. The mighty Johann Sebastian used both the viola d'amore and the viola da gamba with great effect. Many modern composers introduce snatches of melodies by these charming old instruments with fine effect, but it is usually some dramatic exigency which demands them, like, for instance, the delightful passages in the first act of Massenet's "Jongleur de Notre-Dame."

The men who played the viola d'amore best were obscure musicians and "viellists" of centuries that took little heed of the doings of artists. Curiously enough, the name which seems to be

crowned with the greatest eminence for performing on this instrument was that of a man who lived after viols had gone out of vogue and violins had come in, — Karl Stamitz, of Bohemia, born 1746.

The viola da braccio (arm viol), which was a form of tenor, was played resting on the knee, breast, or arm. It was made in three sizes, — the treble, tenor, and alto, — and was sometimes called viola da spalla (shoulder viol).

The viola da gamba was a bass viol, and was held between the knees when played. Mounted with sympathetic strings, like the viola d'amore, it was known as the viola bastardo and the viola di fagotto. Then there was the viola di bordone, the viola pomposa (invented by Bach), the violetta marina (practically the same as the viola d'amore), and several other variants of the humble precursor of the fiddle.

Viol makers of the old days, while holding no great positions, and having but narrow niches in the temple of fame, nevertheless were clever men, and each and all did a thriving business.

A. J. Hipkins, writing about 1877, says: " . . . It is true that in the first half of the last century . . . the vielle contributed to the amusement of the French higher classes, but evidently with that

affectation of rusticity so abundantly shown when mock shepherds and shepherdesses flourished."

Baptiste wrote music for the viol, and Bonin and Corette published books of instruction on playing it.

In England they had, besides the crwth, a bow instrument that was by some historians styled a lyra, and later lyra-violone, and persisted in but a slightly modified form for many centuries. It was pear shaped and not unlike a rather ungainly lute or mandola.

This same instrument, played with a silver bow, was the favourite of Rahere, minstrel to Henry II and Joculator Regis (royal jester). He was a quaint character, who would have nothing but the finest materials used in the making of his instruments, who consorted with "thieves and fiddlers" (says the chronicle), and, incidentally, founded the Hospice of St. Bartholomew.

Colin Muset, the famous French minstrel of the thirteenth century, was as eccentric. He was generous to a fault, would turn his pockets inside out for a friend or a beggar; yet he must have the rarest wood and finest metals used in making his viols. He also despised niggardliness.

"Sire, quens j'ai vielé,"

he wrote indignantly to one miser for whom he played,

"Devant vos en vostre otel,
Si ne m'avez niens donné,
Ne mes gages a quitez,
C'est vilanie!

(Lord, when I have fiddled before you in your house, if you give me nothing for it, and pay me not what I have earned, — 't is villainous!)"

The sellers of viols and other stringed instruments must have begun to make fortunes as soon as the art of fiddling was lifted by the troubadours from the lower classes to be a pastime for aristocracy. Even as far back as the twelfth century Philippe le Bel, in levying taxes on Paris, was able to collect many good livres from the "citolenes," sellers of stringed instruments. One maker of that century is spoken of in the French archives as "Henri aux Vièles (Henri of the Viols)," and, as one writer points out, is probably the first viol maker whose name and art are recorded in history.

In a quaint old book, redolent of queer mediæval spices and ancient dreams, I found the words of a "Chanson du Marchand," the monotonous cry of a French mercer of the thirteenth century trying to sell his wares through the Paris streets:

"Bones sires, beles dames!
J'ai bones violes,
J'ai bones cordes,
J'ai bones cordes à violes,
Bones sires, beles dames!"

("Good sirs, fair ladies,
I have good viols,
I have good strings,
I have good strings for viols,
Good sirs, fair ladies!")

The most famous "luthier" in Paris was Maître Baton, who lived at Versailles and made all sorts of viols, most exquisite in workmanship and penetrating in tone. His sons, Charles and Henri, played beautifully upon them. Other makers were the brothers Louvet, Lambert of Nancy, Delaunay of Paris, and Berge of Toulouse.

They make a charming company, these sweet old instruments of lost gray-and-golden days. One grows very fond of them as one putters about in the half twilight, with the dust and the rust, and the powdered rose-leaves that thicken the atmosphere made by the dear mediæval books. One wishes one could have been a thirteenth, fourteenth, even a fifteenth century lady, if the gods could afford to be no kinder, and pick out tunes that were all made of four notes and had no time at all to speak of, on lovely inlaid things with strings. And it would have been delightful

to have heard the queer, curved bow they loved in those days, scraping worshipfully upon the strings of a particularly rare and loud-voiced viol, while one's chosen knight sang love-songs to his own accompaniment, and the inevitable maid-of-honour kept watch in some picturesque turret nearby.

> "There sat Dame Mysuke, with all her Mynstralsy,"

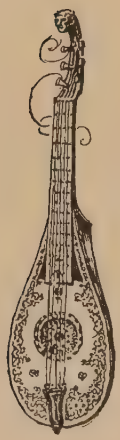
wrote Master Hawys, the good English poet, in "The Passe Tyme of Pleasure" (in 1509, it was, I think, that he lived),

> "As taboures, trumpettes, wyth pypes melodyous,
> Sackbuttes, orgones, and the recorder swetely,
> Harpes, lutes, and croudes right delycyous."

He knew enough to typify pleasure by a goodly company of musical instruments!

What dear people the study of music brings you in contact with,—dead people, I mean; charming ghosts, who used to dance in the market place, or meditate in cloisters; sweet, kindly, merry ghosts, who knew the usefulness of joy and could play the viol.

The Lute Maker of Tyrol



"My life I spent in the woods; while I lived I was voiceless. In death I sing sweetly. — *Inscription on one of Tieffenbrücker's violins.*

XI. — The Lute Maker of Tyrol

THE bow instrument, thanks to the troubadours and to the patronage of the viol by the aristocracy, was now ready to take a more prominent place in the world. Though the violin was not yet a thing finished and perfected, it was growing into its complete beauty and its full power. The day of its crowning was not far distant. To reach that height of art upon which her single violin was to incarnate the abstract glory of music, there was one essential middle ground to be crossed, — that of stringed orchestras, the bow instruments in the aggregate, the apotheosis not of the violin but of *violins*.

From the beginning of musical history there had been stringed instruments ; notably, as we may remember, in Egypt and Assyria ; but the first organised orchestras of viols and other bow instruments were probably established under the patronage of the German nobles of the fifteenth century. These private orchestras were used for feasts and merry-making, like the music of the jongleurs, but their mission was a trifle more extended ; they played important parts in the

chapel exercises, after musical Luther and the Reformation had arrived, and they stood also for a certain access of cultivation and taste. Stringed music began to be something of an art, instead of a trick and trade in one, and a little of the sober application of the Egyptians returned, accompanied by a slight rise in the standing of the musician. This last innovation was a more gradual matter, however. To be sure, the players of viols and other instruments were no longer classed as outlaws and animals, but they still held no social or civil position, and while not actually disenfranchised by law, were practically outlawed by prejudice.

But their instruments grew swiftly in beauty and perfection after the fifteenth century. All over the world the makers of lutes and viols were kept busy improving their handiwork, choosing finer woods and inventing more sensitive models, experimenting with strings, trying new positions for sound-holes and bridges, and strings, and striving, though more clumsily and slowly, to improve the bow.

All over Saxony in particular clever vendors of instruments were making discoveries almost daily, — sometimes by accident, sometimes by conjecture, sometimes, only more rarely, by calcu-

lation. Tests for the resonance of wood were instituted, and many wonderful things about sound-waves were learned laboriously by eager workmen in tiny old towns, bending for amazing lengths of time over the fashioning of imperfect instruments.

Through their imperfections came their perfections, eventually, albeit dimly seen then. For these Saxon and Tyrolese workmen, who lived forever with their instruments, knew and loved them as children and friends. Most of them were hereditary instrument makers, carrying on their trade from generation to generation, and they must have learned from the very limitations of their beloved viols and lutes what their capacities might be.

Strange that the first great violin maker should have come from a house noted for many years for its brilliant record in lute-making. The regular viol makers of the day seemed to have plodded on more slowly, but to Kaspar Tieffenbrücker is generally ascribed the honour of making the first genuine violin in 1511. This has been disputed by some learned men, but we find such authorities as Wasielewski and Emil Naumann accepting it; the former stating positively that there are still in existence three excellent violins by Tieffenbrücker, dated respectively 1511, 1517, and 1519.

The family of Tieffenbrücker was far-famed for the marvellous lutes which it gave to the world. Troubadours and jongleurs, dilettante knights and lyrically inclined ladies went to the little workshops under the shadow of the Tyrolean hills to buy the dainty, inlaid instruments so celebrated in the Old World. Before they were lute makers they had been carpenters, common workmen who made what the public chanced to want. But they had beauty-loving souls, the Tieffenbrücker men, and when they finally took up the making of instruments as their specialty, their lutes were pre-eminent for beauty, alike of tone and of form.

The illustrious Tieffenbrücker names — in what chronological order we do not know — were Wendelin, Leonhard, Leopold, Uldrich, Magnus, and Kaspar. Magnus gained some reputation as a lute maker in Venice in 1607 ; but Kaspar was the really celebrated son of the house, — the only one whose name can be written in gold on the tables comprising the history of the violin.

The story goes that Kaspar Tieffenbrücker was brought up, like his father and brothers, to make lutes, but he was one of the naturally progressive spirits who are fitted for creative, inventive work rather than the capable following of any beaten

path. He had yearnings toward the perfect violin, — the thing that only one master was to achieve, a master not yet born. To this end he took up the study of bow instruments. Rank heresy it was, for his father scorned the clumsy viols of the day, and had spent his long life in the making of lutes as fine as shells in form and as sweet in tone as the voices of streams. But Kaspar worked still at his viols, — worked from red sunrise to red sunset, and far into the night, when the stars rained white fire upon the hills and the wind made violin music around the little workshop.

Now, as we have already seen, the bow instruments of that day were cumbersome, crude, unwieldy things; they were hard to handle, hard to balance, hard to play, and many of them even harder to listen to.

An instrument which we call the tenor viol was then played in all the private orchestras, although its inconvenient form — between a violin and a violoncello — made it very awkward and difficult to play. Its tone was much softer than the rebeck and German "geige" (fiddle), which were still in vogue, but it lacked not only suitability of size but carrying power of tone. The violin, when it came into use, was not

received tenderly by musicians. Its chief quality in its first fledged state was its resonance and high, almost screaming pitch. Even so late as the seventeenth century we find Ogden speaking of "the sharp violin," and Mace of "the scolding violin," — and the sixteenth century critics had harsher terms. The modelled back, so essential to the resonance of the true violin, was perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the instrument as it was in the era of Tieffenbrücker. The tuning of the strings in fifths, while characteristic and important, did not originate with the lute makers of Tyrol, but had flourished spasmodically for nearly two centuries in certain varieties of the rebeck and primitive viol.

Still following the old story, for the truth of which we do not pretend to vouch, we must accompany Kaspar Tieffenbrücker on what was in those days a very considerable journey to Italy. Apparently he quarrelled with his father on the question of the house tradition, which was that the oldest son should always be a lute maker. A pioneer in heart and body alike, the Tyrolese workman left his snows and quietudes to enter a town which continued to be a fairly and busy progressive one for those days, — Bologna.

Once in Italy, he could make what instruments

he chose, and he found himself a workshop and began his real life as a maker of violins. The Italians recognised his gifts and accepted him with open arms; and in most ways his day of fame was a bright one. He quickly lost the German in his name and became, instead of Kaspar Tieffenbrücker, Gaspar de Duiffopruggar — which rather elongated and elaborated corruption seems to have been the nearest approach to his actual appellation of which his Italian admirers were capable. Tieffenbrücker — for so we must still call him, in spite of his newly Latinised name — became not only the friend and help of musicians, but the consort of the Italian nobles. Private orchestras had become the pastime then in Italy, as in Germany, and the princes of Bologna and other cities desired the best and newest styles of instruments to be added to their palace stock. Tieffenbrücker, whose personality was as rarely charming as his skill was unusual, quickly gained the confidence and liking of these erratic masters of the vogue. He was not without the gift of diplomacy, the simple lute maker from Tyrol. It was a pretty trick of his to ornament his choicest instruments with the portraits, arms, or coronets of influential princes, all in fine gold, exquisitely inlaid, and perfect in design. He

was fond, too, of reproducing upon his violins copies of celebrated paintings, landscapes, and occasionally imaginary pictures, allegorical or symbolic in significance. Usually he contrived to have the decorations upon the back and belly of his instrument different, yet of some character that harmonised in idea. Whatever fugitive poet-soul or artistic heart the man possessed went into these imperfect violins of his, which he loved as some men love their verses and others their children.

One day he fashioned a wonderfully lovely instrument from wood which he had chosen himself, away in an Italian forest, and upon it he inscribed this rather unusual sentence: "Viva fui in sylvis; dum vixi tacui; mortua dulce cano," which interpreted means: "My life I spent in the woods; while I lived I was voiceless; now in death I sing sweetly."

He was not without a spice of wholesome egotism, was Tieffenbrücker, for he ornamented many of his instruments with pictures of himself. Thanks to them we have a fairly accurate idea of his personal appearance, for it is difficult to believe, having seen them, that any of them can have been much flattered. His most predominant characteristic, physically speaking, seems to

have been the enormous size of his hands and his head. The one makes him look workmanlike and capable, the other dignified and serious, but the high, narrow-arched forehead and huge shoulders seem somehow out of harmony with each other. His eyes are rather near together and deeply set, his nose straight, his expression direct and grave, his mouth sufficiently sensuous for a true musician. Altogether the man looks attractive, if we may believe his portraits, most of which have been by himself, with no flattery of him or sparing of uncomplimentary detail as to contour, wrinkles, and expression.

It is interesting to note the statement made by many authorities that Tieffenbrücker was originally an inlayer and worker in fine mosaics, when in Tyrol. If this is true, as is quite possible (the ornamentation of instruments then being so very ornate that some superficial "fine art" was essential in the maker of them), the fact would explain the peculiarly delicate work which we find in his instruments, particularly those of the latter part of his life. In the year 1515 François I ascended the throne of France, and the following year saw his Italian difficulties adjusted and a deputation chosen to bring to the Parisian court such bright particular lights

of Italy as his majesty considered would shine most acceptably in the Louvre. The Cardinal of Ferrara was chief emissary. François was destined to influence the life of the Tyrolese master as he influenced the lives of so many great men of his time, as he influenced Da Vinci, and Jean Goujeau, and Rossi, and Primiatice, and Benvenuto Cellini, and Andrea del Sarto, and hosts of others. This rarely artistic monarch, who was to make the Louvre more than ever a thing of joy to beauty lovers, to create a new era in Gobelin tapestries, and to achieve other eminences in æstheticism, chose to summon to France the gifted "Duiffopruggar," lutes, viols, and all. The Cardinal of Ferrara brought the violin maker to Paris, together with a glorious company of which Leonardo da Vinci was one, Benvenuto Cellini another, and other great names not lacking.

The simple, gracious lutanist was bewildered and overawed by the gorgeousness of the French court, but he went to work in the room allotted him to make the instruments which the king desired. François wished several of Tieffenbrücker's most perfect viols for his chapel, and the Tyrolese, glowing with excitement and appreciation of the rare honour done him, toiled early

and late upon instruments that should be as exquisite as jewels. The courtiers laughed at his devotion to his occupation; the ladies were less mockingly interested. What woman does not love the creator of sweet sounds? Tieffenbrücker might have played at hearts at court, if he had had eyes for any loves save his violins and lutes; but his was no fickle passion. But alas for the trust that genius will always insist upon putting in princes! François accepted the instruments, praised the maker, made him an honoured guest at court, and showed his prizes to everyone whom they might be likely to impress; but he never paid for them!

It is about this point in his history that we find the significant statement that the viol maker left Paris "*because the climate did not agree with him.*" Poor Tieffenbrücker!

He went to Lyons and established himself there permanently; and it was there, indeed, that he made his finest instruments — notably one with a scroll composed of a horse's head exquisitely carved and finished, and one ornamented with a design representing a man bending over an hourglass. There, too, he executed his famous "geographical viol," with his map of Paris upon its back, all in finest inlaying.

One of his friends — made perhaps while in Italy, but more probably through that journey of genius into France marshalled by the Italian cardinal — was Leonardo da Vinci, and more than one of the most original and beautiful designs on Tieffenbrücker's instruments were the work of this great artist.

Our "luthier's" troubles were not yet entirely over; a knavish sculptor named Baccio Bandinelli, renowned for his sly, thieving propensities, claimed as his many of Tieffenbrücker's own designs, and injured the lutanist's good repute in several instances. But Bandinelli was too noted a thief to have any serious or lasting effect upon the name and fame of a master of Tieffenbrücker's standing.

His last years were spent peacefully and prosperously enough, so far as we know, and the probability is that he died in Lyons, where he had worked during his last and most successful years. Of this, however, there is only circumstantial evidence.

Much of Tieffenbrücker's life is so vaguely and often so contradictorily chronicled in various histories that it is hard to even gain such an idea of him and of his work as may seem likely to be reasonably true. But, after all, in such dilemmas

it is worse then useless to theorise or search too closely. Such "facts" as may have come to us, mythical or well-substantiated, we must accept perforce and fit together as best we may. If the pieces do not join smoothly, we have two courses open to us, — either to discard some fragments or to call in imagination to cement them all into harmony.

The statements of the wise persons who declare, undoubtedly with excellent reason, that no genuine violins were made before 1520, we cannot rob Kaspar Tieffenbrücker of the golden credit that lies to his name in the bank of public gratitude. Though there are those who dispute the fact that he could have made what one history declares were "very superior violins," the musical world will continue blindly to hail him as one of the first violin makers, and to honour him as such in a glorious company of which one master, laurel crowned but silent, is the beloved and true king, — Stradivari.

Tieffenbrücker's career was a long and illustrious one and he had many followers and pupils, some of them doubtless who had been apprenticed to him in Tyrol and had shared his fortunes cheerfully ever since ; others whom he had picked up in Bologna and neighbouring Italian towns,

as well as in Paris and Lyons later. His independence was complete, his insurrection against Tieffenbrücker traditions eminently successful and memorable. Yet it is a thing most strange to note that in the best portrait of himself that he ever left, a portrait executed not many years before his death, he is depicted surrounded, not by the violins of his lifework and love, but by the lutes that his fathers had fashioned for generations in the shadows of the great hills of Tyrol.

The Gray Friar and Others

"Wistaria-blossoms trail and fall
About the length of barrier-wall,
And softly, now and then,
The shy, staid-breasted doves will flit
Athwart the belfry towers, and sit,
And watch the ways of men."

Austin Dobson.

"Into convents, from which arose, day and night, the holy hymns with which its tones were blended."—*O. W. Holmes on "The Violin."*

XII.—The Gray Friar and Others

In the transition stage from viols to violins many names show up in vivid relief against the confusion of change, development, and complicated growth. Notably we find that of Joan Kerlino, corrupted to Jean Gerlino, the lutanist from Nüremberg, who migrated to Brescia in 1449 and made violins of a primitive but still promising type. La Borde insists that Kerlino was a Breton, but there is small evidence to substantiate the theory and much to prove him to have been of German birth.

Next in the list of pioneers we find a name much more illustrious, though, unfortunately, scarcely better known,—that of Pietro Dardelli, the Gray Friar of Mantua. This brilliant man, perhaps because of the seclusion and privacy given by his habit, is almost an unheard-of character in musical history, in spite of his signally valuable work in the development of the early violin forms.

The convent of Mantua was one patronised largely by ladies of noble birth. Ugly daughters of great houses; rebellious maidens who refused

to consider splendid marriages; sad girls whose lovers had died or been separated from them; widows who scorned secular consolation; women of title who were safest out of the way for political or state reasons; pious ladies whose vocations demanded fitting recognition, but who, because of their birth, could not enter less distinguished orders — all these came in dove-flocks to Mantua, there to settle, softly, and learn the ways and words of the Un-World.

Pietro Dardelli's real name was Pietro Zamure. How he gained the Dardelli, sometimes called D'Ardelli, is not known, unless it was some obsolete title in his family, revived for professional purposes.

"Supposing this explanation to have been the true one," says one writer, "we are all the more puzzled, for being a *religeux*, the Gray Friar was not permitted to make violins for sale, and therefore could have had no object in a *nomme de guerre*, and could have gained no advantage from advertisement.

In 1500 Dardelli is believed to have begun work. The statements that some of his instruments are dated 1496–97 may be true, but it is fairly well proven that he contributed no very valuable additions to the viols and violins of

history until after the beginning of the sixteenth century. He was *cordelier*, or lutanist, to the Mantua convent for many years. Indeed he was so young a man when he first assumed his duties there that his title "Il Padre" was considered by his superior and the chaplain in the light of a joke.

His cell was fitted up as a workshop, and he toiled and dreamed there in company with his varnish pots and fine tools, with the south wind blowing in softly, and the faint, monotonous voices of the nuns wafted from the chapel.

Sometimes the young "Padre" would drop his tools and fall to thinking more and more deeply, until the slow, conventual minutes had grown to hours, and some distant bell roused him to a realisation that he was idling. Into the distance stretched the cream-white highroad, winding away on both sides, — winding to Cremona, to Brescia, to Verona. We remember that Romeo tore himself from Juliet at daybreak to travel on "the road to Mantua," and the whole country is steeped in romance, even to our remote modern senses; magic rises in exhalations from the very earth of it.

Roof on roof, the Gray Friar could count the houses all about; salmon-pink, saffron, and

violet-gray they were, with the gay spatter of gardens and children in between. Bars of level sunlight he saw, and the banked, pearl-crusted clouds above; and there were olive-groves and vineyards, — softly green, and full of the message of fruition and the clarion call of plenty. All these things were to be seen from those high barred slits in the wall of the convent — you could not quite call them windows. All of them were for any man's claiming, any man who could go abroad penniless and barefoot; but not for the Gray Friar of Mantua, whose stomach was well lined and whose habit was warm. The Gray Friar of Mantua must be content on such merry dreams as he might weave for himself between aves and lute-making.

Outside the grated windows of the convent grew pear trees. In spring they bloomed riotously, and made a sort of fragrant poetry under April moons. In the garden certain of the nuns had coaxed up flowers of red and blue and purple. The blossoms hung their faces, all rainbow bells and stars, before the wind; and when the sun burned hottest, at noon, they gave up a very passion of warm-steeped perfume that made the senses swim and dip as though at sea on tropical waters. There were honeybees in the garden,

drunk with the wine nature gives her own; they murmured and hummed languidly and melodiously over the drooping flowers, and the nuns heard the music and wondered — some of them — what it meant. But they all listened to it, and noted that the scent from the garden sometimes grew too heavy, and made their eyelids droop like the flowers.

One day the Duchess of Mantua came to the convent. It was a day written in fire upon heaven — for the Gray Friar. Whether the Duchess's visit was a formal one, or rather in the nature of a retreat, we do not know, — probably the latter, as it was rather the fashion for great ladies to seclude themselves from time to time in a cloister, to meditate and drink milk. It took the place of a rest cure.

For the Duchess the Gray Friar made a lute which, in 1807, was sufficiently beautiful to be treasured by the painter, Richard of Lyons, as one of his rarest possessions. This lute was made of ivory and ebony, wonderfully worked and fitted together. The back and sides were separated by perfectly curved and tempered bands of purest silver. On the rounded and polished back were the arms of the Dukes of Mantua, in very deep, vivid colours and heavy inlayings of

goldleaf, as well as the maker's name, Dardelli. What romance went into this lovely little instrument no one will ever know; it was a triumph of the art of the sixteenth century "luthiers" and the child of the Gray Friar's dearest dreams.

It was by his viols, however, that he won his really serious and important place in musical history. His most famous violin is the one still on exhibition in the museum at South Kensington. Its sound-holes are circular instead of *f*-shaped, and it has no bass bar, so that it could never support the normal tension of the strings, but its sound-post is modern in character and position, and its four strings correspond in tuning to the four strings of the perfected violin. In his quiet convent cell, the Gray Friar worked out more than one of the fundamental principles of violin-making.

Dardelli's pupils were several, and his followers many. Notable among the former were Morglato Morella, of Mantua, and Peregrino (or Pelegrino) Zanetto, of Brescia. Morella, sometimes called Morglato, of Mantua, was barely more than an enthusiastic imitator, but Zanetto was a really remarkable man. His tenors and double basses were immensely superior to his violins, but he has one immortal distinction. He is reputed to

have had a hand in the education of Andreà Amati, the first of the famous violin makers of Cremona. This honour has also been ascribed to Maggini, the pupil of the great Gasparo da Salò. All three of these celebrated men, Zanetto, Salò, and Maggini, lived in Brescia, at that time pre-eminent among all the towns of Italy for violin-making.

Fortunate Brescia was at that time a cheerful, busy town on a plain at the foot of the mountains. It was watered by the river Garga, — the water supply having been carried through the town by Didier, King of the Lombards. It had had a warlike history even then, and was proud of its arsenal and heavy city walls. It was proud too of its "Palloda," the great clock tower in the centre of it, and of its historic record in metal working, particularly in the making of armour. It must have been very progressive for Italy, for a traveller, only a little later than the time of which we are writing, notes with surprise that the women moved about the streets unquestioned. The streets were narrow, the houses close together, the people hurried and energetic. Here was the Italian cradle of violin-making.

Gasparo Bertolotti was one of the very rare makers, — one whose genius created an epoch

instead of doing it honour. He made history instead of illuminating it, and established forms and styles instead of improving upon them. Although, like Zanetto, he excelled in tenors and the larger variations of the violin maker's craft, his work permanently influenced subsequent fiddle makers and made a sharp and individual mark upon the development of the violin.

It is a source of regret to music lovers that we know so little of the personal life of this giant master, — known to us as Gasparo da Salò, — who took his place so vigorously and brilliantly in the history of viol music. He was born at Salò, a tiny village flung down on the shores of the blue lake of Garda. He made all the varieties of the instruments of the viol family, but to-day the only really valued monuments to his skill or talent are his tenors and double basses. In the making of these no one has ever eclipsed him. His tenors are a trifle large for complete ease in execution, but they are extraordinary in quality and bring fabulous sums on any such rare occasion as may find one upon the market. His instruments were remarkable, among other reasons, for his extraordinary varnish, which was almost black, and very rich and heavy. The effect was superb, and the formula was

a matter of pride with him, as well as a profound secret.

He was born in the last half of the sixteenth century, and his period of activity extended into the seventeenth. He worked chiefly in Brescia, and like Zanetto and Maggini is always classed with the "famous Brescian makers."

The only famous violin ever made by Gasparo da Salò was that which is known as the "Treasury Violin." It was originally made by command of Cardinal Allobrandini, and Benvenuto Cellini sculptured it elaborately for the maestro, who was his friend. It is also called sometimes the "Violin of the Caryatids," because of the exquisite representation of the latter. The bridge, which is of boxwood, is carved into the semblance of two fishes. It lay in the Treasury of Hungary for many years, and was finally left to the great Paganini by the Hungarian noble Councillor Rhehazek. The fish, or pisces, happened to be Paganini's zodiacal sign, and he received the instrument with joy, considering it a harbinger of good luck. He loved it devotedly, and often played it in preference to his Guarnerius and Amati.

Giovanni Paolo Maggini was old Gasparo's pupil, and a very gifted violin maker. There are several fine Magginis in existence, notably the

ones which have been owned by De Beriot, the Belgian violinist, by Léonard, Ole Bull, and Vieuxtemps. De Beriot found his in a Paris curiosity shop, and bought it for fifteen francs! It was last reported to be in the possession of Prince de Chimay.

Maggini's work is occasionally confused with that of Barak Norman, a fine old English maker, but his scroll work alone, which is purfled and highly ornamental, should be the hallmark of his individuality in creation.

Maggini was unusually successful in a pecuniary as well as an artistic sense. This was probably due to the fact that he had the good sense to marry Anna Forestro, who had a large dowry, and could enable her husband to leave Gasparo and start out for himself. They had six children, and Maggini was one of the most honoured citizens in Brescia, as well as one of the most contented of householders.

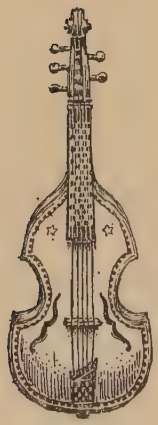
He instituted many innovations in instrument making, being one of the first men, for instance, to cut his wood wedgeways instead of in slabs, as the old "luthiers" had been accustomed to do. But when he was only fifty-one, he died suddenly and wretchedly, in the terrible plague that swept Brescia in 1623.

His painstaking, unhurried work is shown not only in the instruments which he left, but in the fact that in his entire life he made only fifty violins and less than two dozen violoncellos and tenors.

These men, while not the world-hailed masters of their craft, were fine workmen, earnest artists, and true music lovers. To them, working in small shops and spending years of love and labour upon their instruments, belongs as much credit as to Stradivarius, creating masterpieces with the genius that comes in a white flame from the gods, so seldom that men may count the occasions of its coming.

Gasparo da Salò, cutting the heavy wood for his big deep-voiced instruments, and working out with his Titanic, uncompromising brain the principles that a Guarnerius was one day to accept humbly; Maggini, toiling for eighteen months upon one fiddle; the Gray Friar, sitting from red sunset to silver dawn in his cloister cell, cutting and carving by the light of a half burned taper, or a primitive, sputtering lamp, — these men had the touch of the gods upon them, after all; their ears were very close to the Heart of Music.

The Town of Violins



"*A Nicolas Dolinet, Joueur de fluste et violon du dict Sieur, la somme de 50 livres tournois pour luy donner moyen d'achepter un Violon de Cremone pour le service du dict Sieur.* (To Nicolas Dolinet, player of the flute and violin to the said king the sum of fifty livres for the purchase of a violin of Cremona for the service of the said king.)"

Archives of the History of France.

XIII. — The Town of Violins

IN Lombardy, where the silver poplars grow and music is in the air you breathe and the wine you drink and the yellow sunlight that falls upon you, — in Lombardy, fabled and sung by a thousand praising tongues, — there brooded and hummed, worked and dreamed, a busy, thriving town four centuries ago, — the Town of Violins. Its name was Cremona, and the Heart of Music was the heart of the world to the men who worked there and gave their lives to the sweet service of the lovely growing thing that was so surely reaching its meridian of perfection.

On one side was the river Oglio, on another the Adda; on the south the Po swept by, blue-purple under the warm sky, running down, down, down to where the Adriatic waited for it. On the other side of the Po were Parma and Piacenza, dreaming the years away; one could cross over by a bridge if one liked. Round the little city were great walls and towers, and ditches flooded with water, as though Cremona daily expected a new foe. It was very old, this Town of Violins, and its name, originally derived from the Greek,

meant "Alone upon a rock." Its cathedral boasted one hundred and sixty saints, even four centuries ago, and its record of wars and sieges was longer than that of Brescia.

A very pretty, happy, Italian city it was, with unlimited golden light splashed upon roof and street, the shrill music of children's voices, and magical southern skies filtering through "A gash in the wind-grieved Apennine" fit to set you dreaming.

And this from the year 1520 was the world's centre of violin-making, the Town of Violins.

In the narrow, crooked streets flooded with golden sunlight the townspeople might pass and repass, the vagrants might beg, — but the work of violin-making went on. Babies might be born, maids marry, poor folk starve, old men die, and young folks sing, but behind the little windows, among green and violet shadows barred with the gold that struck in from without, throbbed the real pulse of Cremona. For here the first great makers of Italy sat in their workshops and dreamed over their violins.

Progress is a curious sort of giant demonstration of the law of supply and demand. What we want or need usually contrives to become invented, and a dissatisfaction with existing conditions is as certain to breed improvements as

the struggle of the butterfly inside of the cocoon is bound to break the shell as soon as the wings are strong enough for flight. The "troubadour fiddles" were developed from rebecks and lutes and guitars and other primitive instruments because the romantic minstrels desired a fuller tone to support their lyrical efforts when they were singing songs to obdurate ladies. The smaller violins of Tieffenbrücker and the Gray Friar and the rest of the pioneers were the outcome of a growing discontent with the cumbrous, heavy, inconvenient bow instruments of their day. So the full-toned, delicate, perfectly balanced violins of Cremona were made to fit a surging demand for instruments more sensitive and responsive, more warmly flexible in tone, and better adapted to a long, varying gamut of musical expressions. And, like most fresh stages of evolution, the most radical changes in violin-making come from without. It was less the makers than the musicians who created the new instrument through their inability to get desired effects upon the old.

Violins were more and more used each year in orchestras. In 1565 Francesco di Bernado Corteccia, of Arezzo, wrote an intermezzo, with the help of the musician Striggio, in honour of

the marriage of Joanna of Austria with Francesco de' Medici, and introduced four "violini," one "basso di viola," one "soprano di viola," and one "viola d'arco." The effect was rich and musical, but utterly lacking in brilliancy, and the "violini," or smaller violins, were too piercing to be entirely pleasant. How far the efforts of these and contemporary composers may have influenced Andrea Amati and his two sons in their work it is hard to say, but it may safely be stated that Nicolo Amati's violins were directly an outcome of the musical ambitions of Claudio Monteverde.

This brilliant composer was born in Cremona in the year 1568. He thus knew all the Amati violin makers, though while he was still quite a little boy of nine or ten years old Andrea died. The brothers Antonio and Geronimo were fifteen and eighteen years older than he, and took an interest in the gifted lad. He early imbibed the passionate worship of the violin, which flooded all Cremona, and while still very young entered the service of the Duke of Mantua as a violist. There he was taught to play by the *Maestro di Capella*, Marc Antonio Ignegneri, and incidentally learned composition as well. This last was to be his life-work, though he never took the trouble to write correctly or harmonically and was more inter-

ested in grace of melody and dramatic effect than in scientific accuracy.

Above all he loved orchestration, and he was the first to really utilise the dramatic possibilities of the violin. It was in this way that the shortcomings of the instrument became conspicuous, and that Nicolo Amati, now growing up into his long and splendid career, came to create violins that could be used for such purposes as Monteverde and other composers desired. All Italy was joined in a great contest as to what maker could produce the violin which might satisfy Monteverde. The compass of the instrument had to be enlarged, and the quality of tone augmented; sound-holes were made curved instead of straight, the tension of woods was heightened —the entire instrument underwent a vivifying change.

The following story, for the truth of which we cannot vouch, seems to indicate that Monteverde had inspirations in regard to the requisites of the bow also. The rather heavy, unwieldy bow was still in use then, of course. One day, so the tale goes, Monteverde was rehearsing his "Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda." He had written a very effective passage to be played as Tancredi wounds Clorinda, whom he loves but

does not recognise, a passage involving a tremolo on the violin strings. The musicians tried in vain to get the trill, but their bows were heavy and consequently clumsy, and they only succeeded in annoying Monteverde to the point of frenzy. For as long as possible he endured the torture, then springing upon the unfortunate violinist who sat nearest he seized his bow and belaboured him with it till it broke short off at the end, when he flung it at him and paced up and down fuming. When his rage was somewhat calmed he commanded the orchestra to play again. The miserable wretch who had been beaten protested, stammering that he could not play with a broken bow.

"You can play just as well with a broken bow as an unbroken one!" retorted Monteverde, angrily.

The man hastily tied his bow-hairs onto the shortened end and began to play with the other. After a moment Monteverde raised his hand, stopped the entire orchestra, and ordered him to play alone. The man did so, shaking with fear. Monteverde rushed to him, rubbing his hands with delight:

"You have it!" he exclaimed. "The broken bow served you well, my friend."

The loss of the weight in the bow had made it so much more manageable that the musician had

been able to execute the tremolo with much greater ease than the others!

This story is difficult to credit for the reason that we know the bow did not reach its full development for another century, and that when it did gain perfection it was not short, but long and slender, and finely balanced, as the poor musician's broken stick could not have been.

The tale, however true or false, is undoubtedly significant in its portrayal of Monteverde as an experimenter, an explorer in the fields of instrumental music. His services to the violin and its evolution were numerous and incalculable, and his name should be one of the most honoured that ever were connected with Cremona.

Between the years 1520 and 1525 was born Andrea Amati, destined to be the founder of the famous violin-making house of Cremona. The Casa Amati had long been one of the noblest families in the town, and more than one of its sons had achieved distinction in one way and another; but Andrea was the first of them, known to history, to give up his life to the designing and fashioning of violins.

When he was between twenty and twenty-five he made a rebeck with three strings, which is still in existence; a few years later he finished

a viola bastardo, or small violin; a few years later still he made some marvellous specimens of the viola di gamba, the tenor, and the violoncello, and in his last years achieved some beautiful violins of pure form and exquisite tone. This record alone is enough to show the extraordinary gift of the man, the marvellous development of which his rarely elastic talent was capable, and the peculiarly progressive genius which made all the men of his house reach such high achievements in such swift strides. His instruments were finely finished and except for a certain angularity in the sound-holes, and an unresonant height of the belly, showed a vast improvement upon the older Brescian violin. Probably his master was Gasparo da Salò, or Maggini, though this is not certain. In any case, his workmanship is far more advanced than theirs, and many little tricks of manufacture seem to be entirely peculiar to himself. He died in 1577.

The old French record previously quoted says that Charles IX authorised Dolinet to buy *one* Cremona violin, but it is authoritatively stated elsewhere that the king ordered from Amati not one but twelve violins, as well as six tenors and six violoncellos, for the royal private band. The report concerning the number bought varies

curiously. One chronicle records the purchase of twenty-four violins instead of twelve.

A curious mistake seems to have been made concerning this very order. It is usually believed to have been sent to Nicolo Amati, the grandson of Andrea. As a matter of fact that would have been a manifest impossibility if the command was that of Charles IX.

On the back of each instrument made by Amati to fill the king's order were the arms of France and the motto "Pietate et Justitia (Piety and Justice)" — singular irony for Charles IX.

Andrea's younger brother, Nicolo, was less renowned, his chief distinction lying in the full-toned and well-made double basses which he left behind him.

Andrea's sons, Antonio and Geronimo, did not step very much farther either. They were fine workmen, but could not boast the genius of their father. Their most valuable work was that which could best be styled decorative; their scrolls were graceful and showed enormous variety, and their varnish was of a most lovely dark orange tint. The forms of their instruments were really beautiful and their purfling the work of artists.

There is, by the way, a mystery about the brothers Amati. According to the record of their

lives and achievements they must have lived one hundred and forty-eight years each. Either they are credited with many more instruments and many more incidents than they had, or there were two pairs of them, at least, or they broke all records in regard to age and energy.

Geronimo was the more original of the two, and struck out in an independent line, making peculiarly large, heavy violins by way of experimenting in tone volume. Still he never did as uniformly fine work in this individual violin-making as when he worked with Antonio, who, while he lacked a certain pioneering boldness characteristic of his elder brother, was perhaps the more painstaking craftsman of the two.

It was, as a matter of course, Geronimo who set the whole Amati family and half of Cremona in turmoil by his headlong love affair with Madalina di Lattazini, a lady of high birth and violent temper. With a thousand reasons on both sides why they should not marry, the mad pair ended their extended contributions to Cremona scandals by eloping and coming back most anticlimatically wedded.

It was their son, Nicolo, who was to carry the name of Amati to its greatest height. He was born on September 3, 1596, and died August

12, 1684, after a long and honourable artistic career. Although he departed in few particulars from the admirable models of his house, he improved upon them in every smallest detail. The Amati makers, before this second Nicolo, had been, more or less, followers of Gasparo da Salò, Maggini, Zanetto, and others of the old Brescian school. They excelled chiefly in instruments of a deep, heavy tone, like the viola di gamba, viola d'amore, the tenor, violoncello, and double bass. Nicolo Amati confined his most serious efforts to the violino bastardo, and the small violin, — practically the size and style of what we have to-day. He made enormous strides in the knowledge of woods, and the desirable thickness of them; in the requisite proportions of back and belly, and is said to have invented certain varnishes of peculiar value. His large violins — the "Grand Amatis," as they are known — are considered treasures by connoisseurs. In them he imprisoned the sweetest sounds that the world had heard up to that time.

Nicolo's son, Geronimo, was the least gifted of all the Amati makers; apprenticed to the master, he never could learn the deft touch that made the instrument sweet in tone and fine in form. This

untalented Geronimo was a rarely fortunate youth, had he but known it, for he not only had Nicolo Amati for father and master, but he had for fellow-students Andrea Guarneri and Antonio Stradivari!

The entrance of an old Italian family into trade, which in those days was held in scarcely higher esteem than that of a common mechanic or artisan, has a peculiar interest. That Andrea should have first had the courage to apprentice himself to a man whom his world considered an ordinary craftsman, a man almost certainly of inferior birth, however superior his attainments, marks a curious leap upward in the dignity of the art of music. The violin was at last becoming something beautiful, rare, valued, cherished; men had begun to study its sweetness and lovely possibilities; it was no longer an instrument of gay, cheap destinies, but a thing of art to which the house of Amati could give up its generations in all dignity.

Among the more illustrious of the names which we find among Nicolo Amati's apprentices and pupils is that of Mathias Albani the second, son of the Albani of Botzen who studied with Jacob Stainer. The young Albani was a very fine maker and learned his great master's methods so well that many persons have declared his instruments

in no way inferior to Amati's. This is probably an exaggeration due to enthusiasm, for the Albani violins, while beautifully made and of extraordinarily powerful tone, lack the sweetness of the Maestro's instruments.

Albani, like Marcus Stainer and many other makers, gave particular attention to his varnish. His violins, which were made with very high, curving bellies, to throw the sound out in a heavy volume, were covered with deep red varnish that in some lights looked brown and in others purple. His son, who was a violin maker also, settled in Palermo and achieved very little fame, preferring to model his instruments upon the patterns of the old German makers.

Paolo Grancino, of Milan, was another of Nicolo Amati's pupils. He was one of those peculiar temperaments which, with earnest ambition and unrivalled advantages, just fail in their endeavours. He lived long in Cremona, and worked and studied faithfully, but "he never," says his chronicler, "achieved other than second rank."

Among the most brilliant names associated with Cremona is that of Ruggieri. Francesco Ruggieri, known as "Feranceso il Per (Francesco, the Father)," came from Brescia originally, where

he had learned his trade, it is said, from Pereglino Zanetto. He had two sons, Giovanni Battista and Pietro. The former was the shining light of the family. He was called "Giovanni il Buono (the Good)," and worked for many years under Nicolo Amati, in Cremona. He made violins of such excellence that wily dealers often have been able to palm them off as genuine Amatis. It may incidentally be mentioned here that the most famous violin makers of Cremona, following the era of Amati, Stradivari, and Guarneri, were Carlo Bergonzi, who was a pupil of Stradavari, copied him closely, and by many persons is ranked directly after him; the family of Guadiguini, famous for their red varnish, sometimes crimson, sometimes vivid vermilion; also Montagnana, Storione, and Testore, who were less distinguished.

The value of the Nicolo Amati violins is very great, though of course much less than some Guarnerices and all Stradivari instruments. The smaller models cost only from eighty to a hundred pounds, but the "Grand Amatis" are worth at least two hundred pounds. The one belonging to Mr. Betts, in England, was valued at two hundred and fifty pounds, and Sir William Autis' instrument, an exceptionally fine one, was put on

auction for one hundred and fifty guineas, and brought one hundred and eighty.

The men who were privileged to work with the Maestro Amati worshipped him so blindly that they were as ready to copy his mannerisms as they were his great qualities. They travelled away to their several cities and tried to imitate Nicolo's every gesture in stirring varnish or inserting purfling. "Thus did the Master," they would say and were surprised when they failed to emit the magic tone of his instruments.

But it was not only his apprentices and pupils who imitated him, but the whole violin-making world for a time. Directly or indirectly all the great names of the art owe a portion of their lustre to some fine glimmers of initial incentive or primal creation of the house of Amati.

The Song of the Pine

"Then fast climbs up the Master
That ivy case so sheer,
And to the bark yet faster
Lays anxiously his ear.

"And taps it with his hammer,
In mingled hope and fear,
As tapped he at her chamber,
His lady-love so dear.

* * * *

"Now shalt thou fully prove it,
O youngest born of mine,
What song — to those who love it —
Hides in our Northern pine!"

"Stainer" by Hermann von Gilm.
Translation by "L. B."

XIV. — The Song of the Pine

AMONG those who followed in the pathway of Tieffenbrücker were the brothers Stainer — Jacob and Marcus. It is not certain that they were apprenticed to or taught by the Tieffenbrücker family, but it is so stated in more than one chronicle. They lived in Absom, a village less than a mile from Innsbruck, and are known to have studied viol-making from a family of "Lautenmacher (Lute Makers)" at Innsbrück. Jacob, born July 14, 1621, the older and more talented of the two, made very wonderful instruments of all kinds, but is less well known by persons generally than many less eminent violin makers.

Although he studied with Nicolo Amati, in all probability, and certainly worked in Italy for some time, his place belongs among the lute makers of Tyrol, so justly famous for their exquisite mechanical sense in musical manufacture as well as for their many radical explorers in new and fertile fields of music.

His parents were Martin Stainer and Sabine Gräfinger, and like so many of the early instrument

makers, especially in the North, the family was one of mechanics. The elder Stainer was a carpenter, and the oldest brother, Paul, a master-joiner. The two younger boys, with their eager interest in music, and remarkable musical ears, were a never-ending source of amazement and even consternation to their people. There was something disconcerting in this passion for a trade, — or so Paul and his father thought. Were the lads mad, that they spent good hours testing the sound of a piece of wood, and crying out with delight when apparently they were satisfied?

Of the two, Jacob was undoubtedly the madder, as will very quickly be discovered. They say that he had seen violins already; the German Electors loved music, and the Tyrolean towns were full of all sorts and conditions of instruments, introduced through the Court, as well as by the inevitable strolling players. Whenever Jacob saw a viol of more than usually delicate proportions, he paused to study it silently. Says one writer: "He thought and thought, and worked and worked, and thus created the German violin." Doubtless; but there were intervening distances to be crossed first.

His passion for music finally decided his father to turn it to practical account. There was an

organ builder in Innsbrück, with name, fame, and a prosperous list of patrons. To this organ builder, whose name remains wrapped in obscurity, Jacob was apprenticed. He was a fragile lad, full of dreams, and as sensitive as one of the fiddles he was later to make. The massive and titantic character of the work he was now obliged to do was as uncongenial to his detail-loving soul as it was injurious to his delicate body.

He wanted to bend over fine, silken wood, to fashion it deftly, dexterously, into beautiful forms, and to give those forms sweet voices that could charm away the melancholy which often seized him. The finer, tenderer, more concentrated styles of art were what found an echo in his heart. He shrank with jangled nerves from the first mighty boom of each huge instrument he had been obliged to assist in making. His head ached with the distressing bigness of the thing, even as his bones and muscles ached with the unwonted and extreme strain put upon them in his manual work each day. He grew monthly more slender, more nervous, more obviously a creature of spirit and visions, rather than mere heavy flesh. The work told cruelly upon him, bending his slight shoulders, and painting unwarranted lines in his face.

Yet still the bitterest part of it all was his thwarted ambition.

For the secret was this: somewhere, somehow, he had seen an Amati violin. Perhaps some patron of that very organ builder had taken an interest in the pale apprentice, and asked him to his house where the marvel had been displayed. But concerning that we cannot know the facts. Suffice it to say that the wonder of that one violin, however seen, saturated his whole brain until it resolved itself into a spur, a goal, a guiding star, and a daily torment, — all in one. Overworked as he was, he began to take lessons secretly from a family of lute makers in the city. As has already been said, these may or may not have been the house of Tieffenbrücker; evidence points to their having been, however, and it would explain many curious little similarities in Stainer's work to that of the earlier Tyrolean master, — similarities which persist even in his later and more advanced creations.

Marcus Stainer seems to have studied with these same "Lautenmacher," though how he contrived to get to Innsbrück for the purpose we do not know. It would, however, be a far simpler matter for him than for his brother, for Marcus early learned the value of being what some people call

deceitful, and others politic, and till the day of his death, managed to steal what he wanted if he could not get it given him.

So now picture Jacob working by day at his abhorred organ-building, and by night at his beloved viol-making, his eyes growing bigger, and his body smaller, with an almost visible increase and decrease. At last the inevitable happened. One night — a night shot through and through with midsummer madness — Jacob ran away.

One sympathetic friend Jacob had, — a friend who appreciated the peculiarly unendurable elements in his wretchedness, — the parish priest. This man, nameless to us, but forever remarkable through association, was the one helpful soul who had the good sense and comprehending sympathy necessary to encourage our poor, starved Jacob. When the inevitable happened, it was this same parish priest who planned, and arranged, and helped, and who even proclaimed himself willing to shoulder all subsequent censure.

He went to Italy as straight as he could, enduring privations and hardships on the way, but glorying in his new freedom, and in the nearness of his desires. To Cremona he journeyed, — he knew quite well where to go, — and presented himself at the workshop of Nicolo

Amati. The master consented to test his ability, and in an incredibly short time afterward, Jacob was installed in the Amati household, and became the right-hand man of Nicolo. The older man recognised the young Tyrolese's genius, and fostered it in every way possible; and Jacob for a brief time was happy. He was between eighteen and twenty then, and the master a little over forty.

This golden period, however, was doomed to a hasty end. Amati had a daughter, whose name we do not know, but who was the joy of his heart, and the object of his deepest concern, — after his violins. He wished to marry her to Stainer, thus providing her with a charming husband and himself with a talented assistant. The girl seemed content with the arrangement; not so Jacob. At the first dreadful suggestion the lad was aghast, and at the second, he basely fled. Not even the tutelage of the Maestro Amati could reconcile him to marriage at that time!

He escaped to Venice, and went to the master Pietro Vinercati, at that time the most eminent of Venetian instrument makers. He worked there for a time, but soon grew homesick for his Northern hills and streams, and decided to leave Italy. He had been away a little more than three

years, and already had become desperately tired of hot blue skies and eternally yellow sunshine.

The sleepy canals, and the lazy songs that drifted over them through orange afternoons, and violet twilights, and black and silver nights, wearied his senses. As he worked in Vinercati's shop, he could close his eyes and smell, above the heavy scent of Southern flowers being carried past under the narrow window, the new, sweet savour of the wind-shaken pines in the North. The houses opposite, with window-ledges where yellow blossoms burned, and girls leaned laughing, swam in a mist whereon were sketched the glittering peaks of Tyrol, diamond white against a cold, pale Northern sky.

So, at twenty, with his craft already learned, Jacob Stainer turned his back upon the spell of musical Italy, and went home to Absom.

He settled down humbly there, thankful to be at home again, and willing to accept the very smallest and most inconsiderable trade. In his tiny Absom shop violins were to be bought for six gulden each, and he had studied with Amati and Vinercati!

About this time he fell in love, — or perhaps there was some old memory, some tender association or sentiment, at the back of it. Be that as

it may, he was not quite twenty-four when he married Margarethe Holzhammer, November 26, 1645. This, at all events, was a love match, for Margarethe — or Grethel — had not one pfennig of her own, and was not yet nineteen. And as for Jacob — he never had any money, even when he permitted himself to fall a victim, though a contented and happy one, to matrimony.

The harmony and sympathy between the two is indicated in the eight marvellously beautiful daughters of whom they were the parents. None of these girls attained extraordinary distinction, so far as the erratic and erroneous public may be considered, but all of them were lovely in mind and body, and achieved their destiny as sweet and wholesome women.

Six gulden apiece for his carefully made fiddles totalled but an insufficient income, all told. And Jacob, his pride notwithstanding, was forced, for his wife's sake, and his children's, to accept the shelter of the parental Holzhammer roof, at least temporarily.

Jacob had less idea of the value of money even than most musical persons. He spent cheerfully and generously, and paid as cheerfully and as generously when he had the wherewithal. When he did not have it, he felt it to be something in

the nature of a personal affront from destiny, an unnecessary and rather humiliating condition, for which everything and everybody except himself must be to blame.

In 1658 he was made an archducal retainer, in the service of the Archduke Leopold of Austria. This was all very well, but his debts remained unpaid. With Grethel and the babies, he contrived to reach Kirchdorff, in Austria, where in the vain effort to borrow money for the liquidation of his many accounts, he fell hopelessly into the clutches of the usurer, Solomon Hübner. This clever Jew merchant fed on all such foolish stuff as was represented by Jacob Stainer and his ilk. The method might be slow, but it was hideously sure; and the Stainer family were soon, bodies and souls, in the grip of Hübner.

Providentially, in 1669, the emperor appointed Jacob to the post of violin maker of the Court. This new position fired Stainer with new energy and hope. He began to make more and more exquisitely finished violins, calling upon his Venetian studies to supply him with rare and effective kinds of varnish, and inventing star-shaped sound-holes, and elaborately ornamented scrolls, by way of variations. He took a house opposite Krupp Castle, and devoted his every waking moment

to the perfection of his ideal, — the German violin. The linden trees rustled all about him, and the castle splendours glowered over the way; still and forever he worked and dreamed over his violins.

When Leopold died and the Archduke Sigismund came into power, music and musicians were banished from the Austrian Court. Even the emperor abandoned him, and Stainer, who once more could not pay his debts, was thrown into prison. When he emerged, his brain, always sensitive and curiously balanced, had become permanently impaired.

Jacob Stainer lived a strange and erratic life, like most men whose lots take them close to any form of emotional art, even if it be viewed from the least emotional standpoint. In all his varied phases of experience, he worked untiringly, and dreamed of the perfect violin, even as Tieffenbrücker had dreamed.

In Stainer was developed a miraculous sense of pitch. He could test wood by his ear alone, when choosing the materials for his violins; he never thought of applying any test other than his own keen and unerring sense of sound values. He used to wander through the woods of Haselfichte, on the hills of Lafatsch and Gleirsch, and

strike the various tree-trunks with a small hammer. This was, of course, his unfailing test for wood-fitness, but often, without a hammer, he would listen to the fall of the trees felled by the regular forest woodcutters, and note the pitch or tone to which they fell. In this way he decided upon the wood for his next instruments. He was a man of fantastic imagination and eccentric talent; and his life was made up of erraticisms and vagaries.

The poem of Von Gilm, while crude and rough in its translation, is not without its effective passages in the original; notably the part in which Stainer cries:

"As swan — as swan — she's singing,
Though pierced to the heart!"

The inherent vocality of the passive wood is rather remarkably described in this simple little example of verse-making; and the idea is full of poetry, voicing as it does, the essential spirit of music enclosed in the pine tree of the North. This spirit of music, vagrant or specific, abstract or poetical, — a spirit incarnate in all its diverse, enigmatical forms, — we discover in the work of Jacob Stainer.

It is not strange to find that in his last years his highly strained and inventive brain snapped

suddenly, even as a violin string drawn too tight, or left exposed to the wrong atmospheric conditions. When he was about sixty years old, he went quite mad, and lived until his death, three years later, in his house at Absom, spending all the clear days in the garden, chained to a wooden bench, with the sounds of birds about him and the broken dreams of perfect violins in his heart. It is not hard to picture him sitting there, — the wooden bench is still to be seen to-day, — straining his ears in his effort to hear the key of the songs of larks and thrushes, and trying in his sad, mad way to catch the pitch of the very flowers and weeds about him.

He died in 1683, aged sixty-two, one of the very great men in the chronicles of violin-making.

A pupil of Jacob Stainer who achieved much distinction was Mathias Albani of Botzen. His violins were popular all over Italy, and his son was even more talented, and a pupil of Nicolo Amati.

Marcus, the younger brother of Jacob, achieved a certain reputation for violin-making, although in a much smaller degree than the older workman. He was apprenticed to his brother, after the latter's return from Italy, and learned much of his skill before he left his workshop to start out in search

of his fortune. He established himself in the village of Langen, where he made numbers of rather large violins, of thin, sweet tone, which some persons preferred to the more deeply resonant instruments of more celebrated makers. He was a man who spent more time over the form and colour of his violins than Jacob, gaining a certain fastidious satisfaction from the rich brown of that varnish of his, so justly renowned not only in Tyrol, but in Italy. A certain sly, crafty streak in Marcus is shown by the fact that more than once he was known to sell violins under Jacob's name, benefiting cheerfully from his brother's wider reputation. He was not without his own admirers, however. Even so late as in 1746, the great Florentine violinist, Veracini, considered his two Marcus Stainer violins the finest in the world. He named them "St. Peter" and "St. Paul," and treasured them like jewels. Both these instruments, unquestionably Marcus Stainer's best, were lost in a shipwreck. There are very few of his violins in existence, and those few are prized rather as specimens of early violin-making than as valuable instruments in themselves. They all bear little printed slips, pasted on the inside, — one of them running: "Marcus Stainer, Bürger and Geigenmacher

[Burgher and Violin-Maker] in Küpstien, anno 1659."

There is a story which is sometimes told in connection with Jacob Stainer, but which, from all we know of both brothers, is infinitely more likely to have happened to Marcus. It runs as follows:

"Count Trautmansdorff, a rich noble, and Grand Equerry to the Emperor Charles VI, desired a Stainer violin, to add to his already considerable stock of treasures." The chronicle continues: "He paid sixty-six golden caroluses, undertaking to supply Stainer as long as he lived with a good dinner every day, one hundred and eighty florins in specie every month, a new suit of clothes with gold frogs every year, as well as two casks of beer, lodging, firing, and lighting; and further, if he should marry, as many hares as he should want annually for himself, and as many more for his old nurse."

Does not this sound like the sort of agreement which Marcus Stainer might make?

The chronicle concludes in this fashion:

"Stainer lived sixteen years after this, so the violin must have cost the Count in all twenty thousand florins in cash!"

One word more as to the celebrated "Elector

Stainers," the sixteen exquisite violins with rose-coloured varnish, one of which was presented to each Elector, and four of which were sent to the Emperor of Germany. Three of these beautiful fiddles remain in existence; the rest are lost, — no one knows how or where. Undoubtedly these "Rose Violins" were the work of Jacob, in spite of the statement in several records that they were made in a monastery. Possibly the two brothers and their life histories have become confused in the minds of some historians. Marcus, it is believed, did spend his last days in a cloister, but such an end is out of the question for Jacob. The records of his tragic insanity are too incontrovertible. Probably the last finished works which this gifted master gave to the world were the "Elector Fiddles," — the lovely "Rose Violins" of his most mature conception and brilliant execution.

The last picture which we may have of him is in the garden, among the birds and flowers and tremulous grasses, dreaming still, even in his madness, of the Perfect Violin.

In the Workshop of Amati

"Now you know very well that there are fifty-eight[1] different pieces in a violin. These pieces are strangers to each other, and it takes a century, more or less, to make them thoroughly acquainted. At last they learn to vibrate in harmony, and the instrument becomes an organic whole, as if it were a great seed-capsule, which had grown from a garden-bed in Cremona." — *Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

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[1] Dr. Holmes made a curious error here, as it is a matter of common knowledge that there are seventy pieces.

XV. — In the Workshop of Amati

THEY were always busy in the workshop of Nicolo Amati. Outside, life waxed and waned in Cremona; powers battled at the gates, — so we read in the histories, — great nobles rode out to war, and townspeople fought among themselves. Seasons came, hot and cold, wet and dry; moons, suns, and stars shone in turn; old wives talked garrulously of their youth, and young maids dreamed over their spinning at open doorways when the sun was orange-hot; but all these things belonged to another world.

The master and his apprentices had work to do beside which the little affairs of nations and kings and elements and cities were hardly to be thought on. They were busy on the achievement of one deep aim that reared itself splendidly before the eyes of each of them; before those of Nicolo Amati, in the fleeting mist and morn, gleams of a vanished, though beautifully understood hope; before those of Andrea Guarnieri as a lightning flash of promise varied with red glories from a sunset broken with cloud; before those of Antonio Stradivari in a great fire of golden

sunshine, flooding down the splendour of fulfilment in a light that was as the voice of many archangels.

Sometimes it stormed, and rain fell outside, and winds came to shatter the casements, but the master only raised his head and frowned and complained that the light was dim, or that the breeze blew the flame whereon he was brewing varnish.

Here in the old workshop were collected the greatest names in the history of violin-making, — Amati, Stradivari, Guarnerius, Ruggieri, Albani. It requires but a small effort of imagination to see them there, among the beautiful dumb things some day to sing gloriously to a marvelling world. On every side are the tools and implements necessary to the actual manufacture of the instruments; on long tables lie the slender, satiny strips and delicate curves of seasoned woods; on shelves are arranged the rare balsams, gums, waxes, and oils necessary to the preparation of the miraculous "Cremonese varnish"; at one side is steaming slowly a vessel full of that very same precious liquid; on the walls hang instruments of varying degrees of perfection.

Here is white wood, fine as silk or a woman's skin, drying after its long process of mellowing

and seasoning. Here is a pile of spotted maple, held in a vise, that the tone and pitch may be accurately taken by a hammer before it is carved into a delicate and graceful violin bridge. Here is a strip of wood, tested and true, ready for its adjustment as bass bar, and calculated to stand the strain of from sixty to eighty pounds. To the woods and the separate parts of the instruments we will return, but first we will cross the room to a chest which stands in the corner.

In this chest we can discover some of the more valuable of the ingredients for the making of the precious varnish. The list seems a curious one to our modern minds: plum-tree gum, Venetian turpentine, white resin, threads of saffron, aloes, hepatica, gum mastic, frankincense, juniper gum, sandalwood, linseed oil, benzoin, madder, tartaric acid, logwood, Brazil wood, cinnebar, patassa lye, elemi, copal, Grecian wax, alum, and spirits of wine! These and many other strange things are recommended by Alexis of Piedmont and his successors in the arts of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries for varnish that should be golden and glittering or clear and transparent, that by judicious mixing, powdering, pounding, testing, boiling, drying in the sun, and other elaborate processes should

take on hues of crimson, purple, dull red, scarlet, brown, lemon colour, orange, amber, greenish yellow, burnt umber, flame colour, and saffron, as the artisan might desire.

There were also methods of boiling various sorts of wood — Orleans mahogany and Pernambuco wood, for instance — to extract the sap for use as colouring matter; also glue solutions and infusions of isinglass, poppy-seeds, and kurkuma.

The actual secret of the Cremonese varnish is, however, in spite of all these specific directions and amazingly plentiful ingredients, as mysterious and insoluble as ever. A variety of theories has been advanced by eminent connoisseurs: that it was made of amber, fused by dry heat which would not impair its transparency, boiled into varnish with oil and spirits of turpentine, and blended with colours while hot; that it was simply a spirit varnish (because when you drop alcohol on a "Strad" it makes a spot); that it is all a matter of time and the mellowing process of years; that it was a plain oil varnish; that it was only a question of unadulterated materials, and that the pure gums and oils have gone off the market. Charles Reade suggests: "Three or four coats of oil varnish containing common gum,

and several coats of red varnish, made by dissolving fine red gum in spirit, from which the alcohol was allowed to evaporate," and adds that the deep red varnish was coloured by "dragon's blood" and the yellow by "gamboge in its pure form." Nevertheless, Reade himself concludes his theorising with this paragraph:

"Many violin makers have tried hard to discover the secret of this varnish. Many chemists have given anxious days and nights to it. More than once, even in my time, hopes have been high, but only to fall again. Some have even cried 'Eureka' to the public; but the moment others looked at their discovery and compared it to the real thing, inextinguishable laughter shook the skies. At last despair has succeeded to all that energetic study, and the varnish of Cremona is sullenly given up as a lost art."

Nearly all writers on violins have commented upon this strange enigma of connoisseurs and makers — George Hart as follows:

"The more its lustre penetrates the soul, the more determined become the efforts. As yet, however, all such praiseworthy researches have been futile, and the composition of the Cremonese varnish remains a secret lost to the world — as much so as the glorious ruby lustre of Giorgio,

and the blue so coveted by connoisseurs in china."

On and on go the theorists, but the answer to their conjectures is simple: none of them as yet made the varnish!

Meanwhile old Nicolo and his apprentices are at work in the Cremono workshop, toiling anxiously and swiftly, albeit with the most exquisite and painstaking care, lest one moment of golden daylight and still more golden time be wasted, by a mistake, a hesitation, or a second's distraction. Here under the veteran Amati's aged but watchful eyes every hour takes on the value of a jewel, and such dreams as may be dreamed in this quiet, work-filled place are those that may fit worthily between corner-block and belly, bridge and bass bar, sound-post and back.

The old Cremonese saying is: "Given: a log of wood; make: a fiddle." Here are the logs of wood, and here the fiddles; and here, too, are the masters who solved that quaint old problem.

Edward Heron-Allen, maker and student of fiddles, has given the following succinct description of the violin:

"Let us look at the *tout-ensemble* of a fiddle. What is it? It is a hollow box, from thirteen to fourteen inches in length; at the widest point

eight inches and a half, and at the narrowest four inches and a half, broad. It is about two inches and a half in the deepest part and weighs about eight ounces and a half. Beyond this we have a neck terminating in a scroll, which, with pegs, finger-board, and tail-piece of ebony, bring the weight up to about twenty ounces. The wondrous capabilities and wonderful equilibrium of all the parts may be summed up in one short sentence—it supports a tension on the strings of sixty-eight pounds,[1] and a vertical pressure on the bridge of twenty-six pounds."

In every fiddle there are seventy separate and distinct parts, seventy perfect pieces to be fitted together all in absolute harmony and complete balance. This number becomes eighty-three under certain conditions, as may be seen later. The seventy parts are as follows: Back, two pieces; belly, two; corner blocks, six; linings, twelve; bass bar, one; purfling, twenty-four; tail-piece rest, one; tail-piece, one; tail-piece fastening, one; tail-pin, one; pegs, four; finger-board, one; bridge, one; nut, one; strings, four; sound-post, one; and neck and scroll, one. This division is occasionally varied by letting in the

[1] When Heron-Allen wrote this the violin pitch had not been raised, bringing the tension up to over eighty pounds.

purflings in thirty-six sections instead of twenty-four, and in making the neck and scroll in two pieces. There are also fiddles in which the back and belly are each made in one unbroken piece, but they are rare.

The wood used for the backs of violins is maple, pear-tree, or sycamore, — the first being generally considered the finest. For their bellies Swiss or Tyrolean white pine is preferred, — of even grain, fine but not too close. Careful makers will use only the wood taken from the south side of the trunks of trees growing on the southern edge of the forest, — that the tempering of sun and air may be the more perfect, — and some of the older masters would cut their wood only from a small space at a certain distance between the bark and the heart, and between the boughs and the roots; they were also scrupulously careful about the seasons in which they cut the trees, — the months of December and January being the favourite time.

The Cremonese makers are said to have gotten their wood from a variety of sources, not only from Switzerland and Tyrol, but also from Croatia, Dalmatia, and Turkey. Fétis says that much Turkish wood was sent to Venice for galley-oars, and that the Turks, being at war

with the Venetians most of the time, picked out the waviest, curliest, loosest-grained woods possible, that the oars might break and rot the sooner. This wood the French authority concludes was used by the fiddle makers. This may be true, but it is odd that it should have been so, the loose, coarse, crooked grain being peculiarly ill-adapted to violins, and the Swiss and Tyrolean maple, as well as the Italian pear-tree, being much more available.

The white pine was usually brought from Schwytz or Lucerne. Much of the wood had to be floated down long mountain streams and so required months, and occasionally years, of drying and tempering before it could be used. The more illustrious of the makers kept great quantities of wood of various kinds mellowing through the passing seasons. Some of them had processes, involving brine and other preservatives, to strengthen or season the fibres. The wood thus kept could not be stored in cellars or closets, but if it had been rafted or floated down from distant forests it had to be kept as constantly in the sun and air as possible for at least five years. In this time no dampness must approach the wood, and until the seasoning was complete no maker dared use it lest it warp in the workshops,

or later, and the whole fiddle crack or bend. Red pine was sometimes used instead of white, and also deal, and even plane-wood, but all had to be of unexceptionable quality. The grain must always be even, and it must have in it no perversity of wave or curve, no flaw or blemish, no embryo knot or germ of decay, no faintest blush of colour even. The grain of all the seventy parts must run lengthwise to assist vibration.

The wood is always cut with an axe, to leave the fibres uncut, — the saw injures and tears the fine wood nerves. It is split into blocks and planks before the finer workmanship is begun. The larger parts are made of joined wood, — that is, wood that has been cut in wedge-shaped pieces from the log and joined together so as to bring to the surface the part of the wood that grew farthest from the heart of the tree. This wood is finer and smoother in grain, the new layers which form each year growing closer and nearer together with every season. The wedge-shaped slices of wood give the exact distribution of vibratory fibres necessary to the perfect sound-board, as well as keeping the thickest and heaviest wood under the strings when the tension is greatest. So the wood is always cut this way

and not crosswise, as the first viol makers preceding Amati naturally cut it.

In these days every one of the seventy pieces is cut out and shaped with the aid of a compass, for a hair's breadth of difference will spoil the value and proportion, and consequently the sound. How did the early makers gauge so absolutely the measurements of the component parts of their fiddles? How did they know so unerringly the subtle tricks of tension and balance and weight and proportion, and other intricacies which we explain according to logic and rote to-day? How did they find out, for instance, the highest possible demonstration of the necessity that the quality of the wood in hand should determine the thickness of the pieces cut, and also the shape of the instrument?

Lest this last sentence be unintelligible to any of my readers, let me explain more fully. The greater the tension in the formation of a violin, the higher the tone. Although every violin is a thing made entirely of curves, a thing without one single straight or flat line, a thing wherein the heaviest, steadiest weight pulls against every integral portion, rounding out body and tone to the fullest symmetry of perfection, there is a great variety possible in the degree and accentu-

ation of these curves. A fiddle too fully curved and hollowed will have a thick, tubby, mealy tone; one that is too flat will have a shrill, screaming voice that tears the ear with what the Germans call its "Geschrei (high shriek)." Now, here is where the sagacity and intuition of the master makers worked in such exquisite union. They learned to allow for the resonance or dullness of their wood, — as a crack shot allows for the wind in aiming at bull's eye or bird, — and to discount the exaggerated quality of the material by a counter exaggeration in the shape and size of the instrument! If the wood chosen gave, when tested with a metal hammer, a note that was exceptionally high and sharp in pitch, the master knew that the tone must be diffused and softened; hence he built a large violin that was all rounded contours and heavy curves. The sharp wood and the round tubby model counteracted each other's faults, and a perfect violin was made. If the wood was very low in pitch and lacking in resonance, out with the small, flat, thin model and make one even flatter and thinner. The weight on belly, sides, and back in a violin that is only slightly curved is enormous, and the almost bursting tension carries the soft, dull voice of

the wood up into the desired area of vibration. So another perfect violin is made!

The "purfling" of the violin is probably one of the most mysterious phrases and mysterious processes in all violin-making to most uninitiated laymen. It is from the French of course —"pourfiler," roughly translated, "to thread"— and is the survival, Mr. Payne explains, of "the elaborate decoration with which stringed instruments were anciently covered." Every violin has a delicate finish like the most supple, sinuous, gleaming cord, that forms a border to the entire instrument, covering the joining line of sides and belly and sides and back. This border is useful as well as ornamental, for it acts as a protection and consequent preservative to the fine angles and edges of the violin and prevents cracks and other injuries. The purfling is usually done with a slip of maple or sycamore, glued between two slips of ebony, and all fitted into the narrow groove which has been cut for them. The excessive delicacy of this work may be guessed from the fragility of such very slender slips, and the great danger of their breaking or bending. The hands that do purfling must be deft and steady, as strong as steel and as light as snow. That is why so many modern makers of

the second class make a line of paint or ink around the edges of their violins to take the place of the elaborate process so beloved by the old masters.

One by one the secrets of tone were mastered by the inmates of that long-ago workshop in dreamy Cremona. One by one they learned the pulse of the Heart of Music, — the old master and his silent, alert apprentices as they toiled day by day over fine sheets of wood and heavy glue-pots, over delicate carving and the dexterous blending of gum and balsam and secret ingredients. One by one they mastered the strange, heaven-born tongue of their beloved instrument.

"This small, sweet thing,
Devised in love and fashioned cunningly
Of wood and strings."

At the time that we have taken a peep into the historic workshop Nicolo Amati was seventy-one, and as yet the master of fiddle-making. His son Geronimo, who worked with him in the shop, never achieved distinction as a violin maker or in any other line. One can imagine the brilliant eyes of the old master flash with impotent resentment from under his gray eyebrows as he glanced from Geronimo to the others, and compared the dull and uninspired work of his son

with the quick facility and brilliant adaptability of such lads as Mathias Albani, Giovanni Battista Ruggieri, and Antonio Stradivari. Andreas Guarnieri and his little son Giuseppe were also inmates of the workshop, but neither of them were apprentices. The latter was still a tiny child, and the former had been making violins of varying degrees of merit for seventeen years. But everyone under Nicolo Amati's influence worked like slaves, for he permitted no laziness. Perhaps it was thus that Stradivari first acquired his extraordinary genius for industry, the inexhaustible and incomparable energy which was to endure through all the years of his long life.

Of Ruggieri, Albani, and Grancino we have spoken before ; it remains for us now to concern ourselves briefly with the two greatest of all names in violin history, — Stradivari and Guarnieri.

But first of all let us pause to consider that small slender wizard without which Amati and his successors would have laboured in vain, — the bow.

The Violin's Lover

"... The bow is the male and the strings are the female elements. They can only vibrate when touched — swept into a tempest of emotion, or caressed into tender whispers. They wait and pine for this magic touch, and long for their own fulfillment." — *Rev. H. R. Haweis.*

XVI.—The Violin's Lover

THE most perfect fiddle in the world would be silent, stupid, and valueless without the bow. Neither harps nor lutes are instruments in which the spirit of sex is dominant; the harp is in its very essence and character a celibate, and the lute, in spite of its checkered career, is a thing of very thin, pale passions at best, giving but a sterile music, with neither fire nor blood-corpuscles. As for the violin, what would it be without its lover? A barren blossom, an unfinished vessel, an old maid among instruments.

The relations of the sexes were never so exquisitely illustrated and symbolised than by the violin and the bow. Masculine dominance and strength and activity; feminine submission, passivity, and responsiveness: where can you find the metaphor clearer than in this instrument, which, in its complete form, is two in one, the male and the female? The bow alone can bring forth the hidden sweetness of the violin's secret heart; without her strings the bow is dumb,—a mere stick of wood strung with hair. Together

they can make the angels stand still in heaven to listen.

The evolution of the bow has been as gradual as that of everything else. It has had its day of uncouthness, of faulty, halting utterance, and awkward expression, but, like the violin, it found the final form best suited to its use and mission, and to-day is only less important to the fiddle lover than his "Strad" or Giuseppe itself.

We remember the curved stick with the crotch in one end and the strand of hair finished by a knot, which served for a bow in the Middle Ages. Farther back still we have seen that a flexible rod with a string or animal sinew was used, and that in the early Oriental days a bamboo cane was considered sufficient and satisfactory.

The primitive bow was almost triangular in shape, so sharp was its curve. Then, in about 1620, the stick grew straighter, and a jutting piece separated it from the hair at one end. It was thus pointed in shape, the widest and heaviest part resting in the hand. A primitive nut and head, composed of wire and iron, regulated the tension of the hair. This bow, when somewhat modified in 1640, was a distinct step in the right direction, though the next phase of development, 1660, shows a curious step backward in a short,

very heavy, ungainly bow, with a pronounced curve toward the end of the stock. In 1665 they invented a weird thing that had teeth at one end, into which the hair, ending in loops, could be hooked. No real progress was made until, in 1700, Corelli made the first rational and practicable bow ever brought to the light of day. It was still far from perfect, being much too short, not at all elastic, and absolutely straight; but it was made of light wood, the principle of it was right, and it laid the stepping-stones for future makers.

Arcangelo Corelli was one of the famous composers of his day, as well as a most brilliant and advanced violinist. He was born in Fusignano, Imola, in 1653, and studied under the masters Matteo Simonelli and Giovanni Battista Bassani.

He is renowned for his friendships with Cardinal Ottoboni, in whose house he lived; the painters Cignani and Maratti, who helped him collect pictures; and Handel, whose music he was wont to murder, until, on one occasion at least, the German would seize the violin from his hands in a fury. When corrected in this manner by his illustrious colleague, Corelli said mildly, and with his all-pervading Italian courtesy: "Ma, Caro Sassone, questa musica è nel stilo francese, di

ch'io non m'intendo! (But, my dear Saxon, this music is in the French style, with which I have no experience!)" This was the more unfortunate in that Handel had written the thing particularly for Corelli, and to suit his technical facility on the violin.

He had an unlucky experience with Alessandro Scarlatti too. He conducted and played the solo in a composition by the great Neapolitan, and played it in C major instead of C minor. One of the musicians played it properly, and Corelli, noting the discord, began again. Once more — C major! Scarlatti, who was present, smiled, with polite encouragement, and murmured, "Ricominciamo! (Let us begin once more!)" They did. C major again! When Corelli realised the enormity of his musical mistake, he was stunned with despair, and, being a rather limited person, who took himself very seriously and had no sense of humour, he left Naples at once.

Soon after this he found himself ousted from public favour by a new violinist named Valentini, and a year later, 1712, he died — of a broken heart, his friends said.

He left behind him a number of unusually valuable works for the violin, but his two greatest heritages to the musical world were the improved

bow which he invented and used, and the innovations which he introduced in the technicalities of violin-playing. In this he had no competitor in his day, and the theories of execution which he was able to demonstrate created a standard which, in some respects, has remained unchanged ever since.

The next famous inventor of bow improvements was another composer and violinist, Giuseppe Tartini, born in 1692, at Pirano, in Istria. He was an odd character, who spent the first part of his life in rebellion, disobedience to authorities, and unreasonable love affairs, and the rest of it in a gentleness of heart and art as admirable as it was amazing.

Perhaps his singularly unpleasant wife had a chastening influence, and then, too, the ever-present sorrow of his lack of children affected him sorely. He was a big-hearted man through all his vicissitudes, and as such yearned for his own sons and daughters. Failing these, he made his pupils his children, and they loved him devotedly. He wrote some brilliant music for the violin—far in advance, technically, of that of Corelli—and made a bow that was longer, slenderer, more flexible, and infinitely easier to manipulate than any that had been fashioned before.

He was also the composer of "Il Trillo del Diavolo," one of the most famous of the early sonatas, and an extraordinary piece of work, judged by any standards. He wrote the story of this remarkable piece of music in these words:

"One night I dreamt that I had made a bargain with the Devil for my soul. Everything went according to my command; my bond servant anticipated all my wishes. Then the idea struck me to hand him my fiddle, and to see what he could do with it. But how great was my astonishment when I heard him play with consummate skill a sonata of such exquisite beauty as surpassed the boldest flight of my imagination. I was enraptured, transported, enchanted; my breath was taken away; and . . . I awoke! Seizing my violin, I tried to retain the sounds I had heard. But it was in vain. The piece I then composed, the 'Devil's Sonata,' was the best I ever wrote, but how far below the one I had heard in my dream!"

So we came to the perfecter of the bow, François Tourte. He was born in Paris in 1747, and died there in 1835. He was one of a family well-known already as bow makers, his father and his elder brother Xavier having won comparative distinction in that line. He himself was, however, a unique

person, both as a workman and as a man. He was nothing, if not original.

After experimenting on every kind of wood and upon a vast variety of objects which would seem to have not the remotest connection with violin bows, he finally tried making bows out of the staves of old sugar-hogsheads shipped from Brazil. There he stopped, and went no further, for he had found what he wanted. The wood was right; the saccharine quality could be added by liquid preparations, heating, and other simple processes. *Voilà!* the thing was done! And violins are still made of Brazilian wood!

He made great numbers of bows, and worked until he was quite old. His finest bows have nuts of tortoise-shell and are mounted in gold, and he charged for them twelve louis d'or. To-day they bring from fifteen to thirty pounds.

When he got tired making bows, he used to go and sit on the banks of the Seine and fish for gudgeon till the sun went down and the mists began to rise. He was eighty-eight when he died, and he worked unceasingly until the last year of his life.

Other names stand out in the records of bow-making; notably Nurember, whom many persons consider to have contributed much to the

development of this very simple thing with such huge capabilities for producing music. But Corelli, Tartini, and Tourte are the men to whom the consensus of authorities gives the fullest credit.

The responsibility of the violin bow is a heavy one. As it is, delicate, elastic, sensitive, it moves the sulkiest instrument into heavenly sweet harmonies; but just suppose it were rough, or squeaky, or guttural in its play upon the strings—why it would make the clearest voiced fiddle sound like that horrible concert of Louis XI when they collected big and little pigs and pricked them in succession to make them squeal on different notes!

Guarnerius

"The 'Cannon' of Guarnerius, if I am not mistaken, speaks in a voice of thunder against all those who I trust may prove to have been the calumniators of the man who made it!"— *George Fleming*.

XVII. — Guarnerius

THE house of Guarnieri achieved so rare a distinction in the field of violin-making that the name is not infrequently spoken in the same breath as that of Andrea's illustrious comrade and fellow-student, Stradivari. The first of the family that is known to posterity worked, as we have seen, with old Nicolo Amati, learned his craft from the example and teaching of the greatest living master of fiddle-fashioning, and even after he had passed the age of apprenticeship or even study lived on in the old workshop, acquiring finish and dexterity, if not inspiration and originality. Talent Andrea undoubtedly had, and a strong love for violins and the making of them, but he lacked the genius of those who were to come after him. Grave, unremarkable, soberly interested, but utterly lacking in distinction of work, he sat, year by year, in the Cremonese workrooms, while the younger, newer brains about him seized ravenously the learning which came to him so laboriously, and lads like Antonio Stradivari, Mathias, Albani, and "Giovanni il Buono" were finishing fiddles that the Maestro

allowed to go out into the world bearing the great label "Nicolaus Amati Cremonensis!"

Guarnieri's son, the little Giuseppe, breathed in the atmosphere of violin-making and violin-worship from babyhood. Perhaps his father, feeling his own limitations, and guarding still his youthful love for fiddles and dreams of bringing them to beautiful perfection, brought up the child in the surroundings best calculated to influence his impressionable years.

When father and son left Amati they set up a workshop of their own, known as the "Sign of Saint Theresa (Sub Signo Sanctae Teresae)," which curious date appears on all Andrea's instruments, and many of his son's also. The older Guarnieri's fiddles were fine in make, though lacking in any great individuality. Their finish was exquisite, and their varnish a marvel of warm orange tone. The artist soul in this silent founder of the famous violin-making house spent itself luxuriously upon exquisite purflings and ornamental scrolls, smooth, graceful bodies, and tints of fire and gold. To his two sons, Giuseppe and Pietro, he bequeathed a higher and less circumscribed gift. By the time Andrea had outlived even his limited, though gracious, usefulness, Giuseppe (known as "Giuseppe Filius Andreae")

had begun to make fiddles far surpassing his father's.

"The originality of the Guarnieri knew no limits," says one writer, commenting upon the remarkable fact that no two of this exceptional house made violins that remotely resembled each other in model, tone, ornamentation, varnish, or method of manufacture. Giuseppe made no attempt, after his first tentative years of work, to follow his father's style, and rapidly created a form and quality of instrument utterly his own. He set his sound-holes at a peculiar angle, instituted a very sharply accentuated, narrow waist, and invented a varnish with the clear glitter of sunlit mica. Incidentally he taught his little cousin, named after him, one day to be the most illustrious of his house, and the second greatest fiddle maker of all time. The period of activity of Giuseppe Filius Andreae was 1690-1730.

The younger son of Andrea, Pietro, was even more original. He copied neither his father nor brother, and made his sound-holes very far apart, and of an entirely new shape. His model was higher, and in several minor parts his work shows a definite attempt to progress and depart definitely from rigid standards. He journeyed to Mantua as soon as his craft was mastered, there to install

himself under a second "Signo Sanctae Teresae" and to win fame and fortune under the name of "Petrus Cremonensis" — Pietro of Cremona. He began work about the same time as Giuseppe, but retired five years earlier, in 1725 in fact, though he taught violin-making after that. His most notable pupil was his nephew, Giuseppe's son, another Pietro, who followed his uncle's rather than his father's methods, and followed up a style of work which, from the two names associated with it, has come to be called "Petrine." He began work in 1730, the year of his father's retirement, and soon, being like most of his people a rover and adventurer, hied himself to Venice. He is known as Pietro of Venice, and closely affiliated himself with the City on the Sea. He had his grandfather's passion for artistic detail and wealth of color, and revelled in the marvellous Venetian varnishes, which seemed to burn and glow and smoulder and intoxicate as one gazed on them. His violins dazzle the senses with their splendid colour and delicate finish.

Giuseppe and Pietro (Petrus Cremonensis) had a sister, Caterina, who is said to have known more about violin-making than was quite seemly in an Italian maiden of the higher class in the seventeenth century.

According to the story, she used to help her brothers in many ways, even gaining a certain skill in the construction and finish of the instruments, as well as mere facility in assisting the men. How many scrolls this almost unknown Caterina Guarnieri may have carved, nor how much purfling let in, one cannot conjecture. It is curious to think that one or the other of her celebrated brothers may have put his name to her work.

Now, meanwhile, the great Maestro Guarnieri had been living and working, but if one did not speak of his less illustrious, yet eminent kinsmen, to begin with, one would forget to do so at all, so superlative were his glory and genius: and surely that would not be giving fitting honour to a gifted and distinguished house.

Andrea Guarnieri, quiet and unassuming, had a brother even quieter and more unassuming. This brother was called Giovanni Battista, or Giam'-battista, and he never dreamed of making a violin in all his uneventful life.

Of his wife we know little, save that her name was Angela Maria Locadella — a musical and suggestive one. Perhaps she was a creature of emotion and ambition and transmitted something of fire and visions to her son; or perhaps it was

only a remote strain of music love, such as had cropped out so soberly in Andrea, and now swelled to vivid fulfilment in another of his race. Be that as it may, of Angela and Giam'-battista was born on the eighth of June, 1683, Giuseppe, —sometimes known as "Giuseppe del Gesù,"— the last and greatest of the fiddle-making house of Guarnieri.

In stirring the dust that lies on the letters of every great man's name, in brushing away, or at least trying to brush away, the cobwebs that years, however rich in honours and appreciation, must leave, in lifting the lamp of inquiry in the dark, silent rooms of dead lives, one is haunted by a sensation at once shrinking and curious, eager and yet abashed. One longs to enter into the very soul and heart and living blood of the man whose ways one is seeking to follow, and at the same time one shrinks, because the guardian of the tomb seems absent, from thrusting into its sanctuary even the intrusion of a prying query or impertinent conjecture. Surely, one says to oneself, a man's grave is sacred; and by dying he should be safe from being turned into a public problem, still less a public interest.

Yet, if one pauses to consider, the guardian of the tomb is never absent. The truth of this

man's life will always be a secret; his secret will always be kept. The whole world may pass by on the outside, may peer and pry as they will, may even lean into the quiet darkness and see the casket where he sleeps through the centuries; but no man may enter there; the guardian of the tomb stands watchful, if unseen. So we may guess, and marvel, and wonder, and conjecture, and theorise, — it is all quite safe and harmless. We shall never disturb the ashes even of his lightest dream or thought.

Thus, from the outside, straining importunate eyes to pierce the shadows, we may look on the much storied, much discussed, doubtless much slandered life of him who wrote himself upon the musical ages as "Guarnerius."

As has been said, Giuseppe del Gesù studied with his cousin, whose namesake he was, and learned all that that redoubtable master could teach him. It is highly probable, moreover, that his erratic and original genius fed itself at more than one source, and that he acquired skill not only with the aid of his kinsman, but under the guidance of other violin makers of Cremona. It has even been asserted that one of his masters was Stradivari himself, and although open to grave doubts, this supposition is not impossible.

Payne says: "Whoever may have been the instructor of Joseph Guarnerius, his real master was Gasparo da Salò. He revived the bold and rugged outline and the masterly carelessness, and with it the massive build and powerful tone of the earlier school. Perfection of form and style had been attained by others; tone was the main quality sought by Joseph, and the endless variety of his work, in size, in model, and in cutting of sound-holes, merely indicates the many ways in which he sought it."

From the first, Giuseppe, or Guarnerius as he is called, scorned the restrictions of what one writer terms "the geometrical curves, fineness of finish, and softness of tone" of the Amati family. He studied their violins as he studied those of his kinsmen, as he studied Albani's, Ruggieri's, Stainer's, Stradivari's; but his impatience discarded the exquisite colouring of a Pietro of Venice instrument or the careful finish of one by Nicolo Amati. He wanted tone—tone—tone, and always tone. Who cared for the body? It was the soul he was trying to find and fetter.

To the old Salò instruments he turned with an inevitable and peculiar tenderness. Here was the voice that cried and commanded,—not the

perfect voice of his dreams, but a full, round organ, before which things vibrated. Brescia, with Maggini and his school, furnished most of the models that first fired young Guarnerius. He drank in the spirit of the violin; lived in the essence of fiddle-making, with the ideal of the perfect stringed instrument before his eyes. And long before any sane person could have dreamed that he had half mastered the rudiments of his art, he began to make violins.

He obtained, no one knows how, a huge piece of pine, with a peculiarly musical pitch and great acoustic properties. "This," Hart says, "he regarded as a mine of wealth." Slab after slab, block after block, he split from its seemingly inexhaustible mass, fashioning it swiftly, even roughly, into wonderfully resonant violin bellies. The wood was by no means perfect, according to the fastidious requirements of most makers, having a large sap-mark through the centre, — a sap-mark which leaves its stain across many of his finest fiddles. His work was absolutely unscientific; that is, he trusted to nothing save his instinct and genius, and rarely, unless for some special commission, took the trouble to finish any of his instruments even smoothly. He had no designs, no models, no

devices to insure accuracy, no help from any external or secondary sources. Most of them he sold for small sums, to support himself or to spend in drinking and gambling.

He was a born adventurer, more markedly and even viciously so, — if we are to believe report, — than any of his roving family. Carlo Bergonzi's grandson gives us most of our information in this connection, and his judgment and report may have been coloured by some personal influence; but however many grains of salt one scatters upon the testimony, it is hard not to believe this much, — that Guarnerius was a gay and unscrupulous spendthrift, fonder of pretty women than church-going, and of red wine than domesticity. He married a quiet Tyrolese girl, who did not complain when he spent the night in the wineshop, and who helped him with his work as well as she could — mixing glue and varnish, sorting and cleaning tools, and keeping careful guard over his completed masterpieces.

Work was so easy to Guarnerius that he did not have the anchor which ambition and industry give to many a man of his temperament. Violins grew under his hands as laughter and song came to his lips, and why should he keep sober or

virtuous when he could make just as fine instruments when he was neither?

They say that Guarnerius never passed a girl without a smile, and never a pretty one without a kiss — if he could get it. Meanwhile his Tyrolese wife sat at home and watched the gluepots.

He entered a religious order when he was very young; why, no one can guess, unless, as is quite likely, the order were of some peculiar political influence and its advantages civil rather than religious. His holy association gave him at least a pretty signature, than which it would be difficult to conceive anything more singularly inappropriate, — Giuseppe del Gesù! After his name he put on his violin tickets the sacred monogram I $\overset{\text{H}}{\underset{\text{S}}{\text{✠}}}$, "Jesus Hominum Salvator," sometimes deciphered also as "In hoc signo vinces."

Either through his religious affiliation or because "it was his nature to," Guarnerius managed to get involved in political trouble of a serious nature. Those were days when bail and bonds and such conveniences were not at the disposal of the prisoner at the bar, and when, moreover, offences which we consider hardly worthy a newspaper notice were punishable by imprisonment, land confiscation, or death. It is only fair to add that some of our present-day capital sins were

thought quite *en régle* then ; but that is neither here nor there.

Guarnerius was put in prison, and our imaginations must decide for each of us what became of the Tyrolese wife. Perhaps she died, or perhaps she went home to her mountains, or perhaps she sat among the dried-up gluepots and waited for him to come back. She seems to have been a quiet person, one hears so little of her.

Guarnerius was not happy in prison. He was uncomfortable, hungry, and cold, for prisoners were lodged wretchedly then. Moreover, he chafed under the weight of his confinement. The very essence of his life had been freedom ; he was more desperate than ever was wild bird newly caught in a cage too small for it, for he had not even that dumb philosophy of resignation which birds and beasts learn in suffering. He could not forget and grow accustomed to dreariness. His brain leaped and throbbed and clamoured for the life that his whole temperament so superbly fitted him to enjoy to its full measure, — good and bad alike.

The Gaoler had a daughter, and she fell in love with Guarnerius. The details of this strange little romance are not known, but in its very outline it makes an odd sort of appeal to one's sympathies :

Guarnerius, pacing the floor and storming against the discomforts and indignity of his condition, his splendid vitality and fabulous charm undimmed by the misery of his state; the girl watching him anxiously, shyly tiptoeing in to bring him some cheap dainty, or to offer him such wistful comfort as she might.

It ended in the determination of Guarnerius to make fiddles again. Not only would it give him occupation, but he could sell them, — or rather the Gaoler's Daughter could sell them for him, — and with the money he could obtain comfortable bedding, decent food, and an occasional flask of wine. But how to get the materials? His brain could devise no way, but the Gaoler's Daughter — well, the Gaoler's Daughter was in love. She went on a begging expedition among all the violin makers of the city. She was fired to inspiration by her passion and her eagerness, and from no workshop did she come empty-handed. Every maker contributed something after hearing her story, — so fervently, desperately told. One gave one tool, and one another, none new, nor of the best, — the sort that were laid aside in the shops, but not thrown away. One generous man gave her a quantity of red pine, rather badly flawed; another, even more charitable, relinquished a

pot of varnish which had turned out wrong. With stray contributions of cracked maple strips and imperfect strings she contrived, after some days, to get together enough in the way of violin-making materials to carry to her lover.

She got them, bit by bit, into the cell, with the utmost secrecy, and so work began. Guarnerius groaned aloud as he looked at the crude stuff before him, and thought of his great musical block of pinewood. But he laughed afterward, and kissed the Gaoler's Daughter, and set to work without any further complaint.

Bad as his materials and tools were, he made some fine instruments, in his own splendid, vigorous style, paying no attention to polish nor neatness, but wringing some resonant sweetness of vibration out of even the flawed red pine that the Gaoler's Daughter had brought him. Some of these instruments are still in existence. They call them the "Prison Josephs." When the violins were finished (how many vivid dreams, I wonder, were shut into them, there in the dim prison cell where the master made them?) the Gaoler's Daughter took them and carried them to dealers, to private individuals artistically inclined, and to musicians. When these failed she hawked them about the streets, and thus sold them all.

And she bought food and wine with the proceeds, and some few better materials for her fiddle maker, and so went back to the prison. That is the story of the famous "Prison Josephs." I do not say it is the history, for no man knows the truth of it—only the high gods and the soul of the Gaoler's Daughter.

It was after the prison episode, when Guarnerius was once more free, that he made his great "Violin du Diable," supposed to have supernatural powers, and also his historic "Cannon," which later was so dearly loved and prized by Paganini.

The story is told that once the "Cannon" was ill—out of sorts—indisposed—what you will. Paganini sent for the violin mender, who found himself obliged to separate the belly from the sides. When the knife was inserted the whole instrument vibrated so violently that the strings emitted a harsh cord that sounded like a moan. Paganini was so moved and distressed at what seemed to be the suffering of his beloved instrument that he cried out in agony, and then fainted away.

Fleming declares that the "Cannon" should silence those who, like Bergonzi, have tried to hurt the memory of the Maestro; and I, for one,

should be glad to believe that this superb instrument does indeed cry with the voice of truth in defence of Guarnerius. And after all, what is the worst we know of him? A little recklessness; a love of gay company, mellow wine, and women's lips; a fine unrest with money in his pocket; no great domestic virtues, and a prodigal, opulent genius for making things that could sing!

He was only sixty-two when he died, and he had contrived to be better and oftener loved than is the fate of most men, and to have made violins that only one maker ever surpassed.

So we take you at the "Cannon's" valuation, Guarnerius, and let its incomparable music explain to us, in divinest sympathy and noblest justification, the things we might not otherwise quite understand.

The Master

"The instrument on which he played
Was in Cremona's workshop made
By a great master of the past
Ere yet was lost the art divine;
Fashioned of maple and of pine
That in Tyrolean forests vast
Had rocked and wrestled with the blast;
Exquisite was it in design,
A marvel of the lutist's art,
Perfect in each minutest part;
And, in its hollow chamber, thus
The maker from whose hands it came
Had written his unrivalled name —
'Antonius Stradivarius.'"

H. W. Longfellow.

XVIII. — The Master

ANTONIO STRADIVARI was born sometime about the year 1650. The disparity in the dates of his birth as given by different authorities is rather surprising applied to a man of so much historical importance, and one to whose life so much publicity has been given.

The years 1644, 1649, and 1664 have all been accepted, at various periods, as the authentic date of the great man's entrance into the world. Count Cozio de Salabue and Mr. Wiener, both of whom owned dated Stradivaris, containing also the maker's age in both cases, did much toward setting the incomprehensible error straight, as did Fétis, a most sedulous worker and searcher, though constantly inaccurate, and W. E. Hill, a genuine and authoritatively informed student of the subject.

The name Stradivari dates back, some persons say, to the beginning of the twelfth century, but the most conservative authorities declare that the earliest record of the family is dated 1213. Its most eminent men before Antonio seem to have been Galerio and Alessandro Stradivari (1230

and 1400), who were both Orientalists, and Fra Costanzo, a monk of the order of the Umiliati, who made a specialty of Aristotle's philosophy early in the fifteenth century.

The name Stradivari is the plural form of Stradivare, the Lombard variation of Stradiere, from Stratiarius, which meant a douanier, or toll-gatherer, such as were stationed on the Stradi or highroads for the purpose of levying road-taxes from passers-by. The office was a feudal one, and in itself alone shows the antiquity of the house, though it marks no suggestion of nobility of birth or even of distinguished position.

They were commonplace burgher-folk enough, the Stradivari; and who could have guessed that such a simple pair as Alessandro Stradivari, the citizen, and Anna Moroni, his good housewife, could have, by any queer freak of fate, chance, or heredity, become the parents of one of the world's most unchallenged geniuses? One wonders if they felt premonitions of his greatness, and were disturbed thereby, when he was still a laughing baby with no higher aims than milk and warmth and the cradling motion that puts one to sleep if one is little.

Of many violin makers we may say "He was a master," but of Stradivari alone we can declare

"He is the Master." Other men were unusual; he was unique. Other men had talent, more or less resplendent; he had genius—the genius that permits of neither classification nor qualification, the genius that requires no statements, no explanation, no description, above all, no adjectives.

Tieffenbrücker was a past master in finish and delicacy of ornamental work; Stainer had an instinct for wonderful woods; Gasparo da Salò had big inventive brains and daring hands; Maggini had industry and a fund of creative variety; Dardelli poured love into his instruments; Zanetto gave them the study of all his days; the Amatis excelled in warm-hued varnishes, exquisite purfling, and angelic sweetness of tone; Guarnerius was a magician in producing resonant, full, echoing music. All the early makers had, in their several ways, rare gifts calculated to place them high in the aristocracy of fiddle-making; but above them stands the King,—gaunt, tall, determined, fervent, indefatigable, gentle, inspired. He it was who combined the Gasparos big plunges into progress and innovation with Tieffenbrücker's minute concentration upon a single flowing line; who welded the musical instinct of Stainer with the pedantic accuracy of Zanetto and Maggini, and the careful finish of the Amatis with the free

fearlessness of Guarnerius. He it was who had no more need to work than Giuseppe del Gesù, being fired by a far brighter, whiter flame, yet who spent all his long life in studious toil, going humbly as a little child to the service of the art which he, and he only, had perfected, passing his predecessors quietly upon the road, yet never taking his clear eyes from the angel that inspired him; never pausing, never permitting his brain to lag, his body to grow weary, or his heart to become satisfied. Only the very great can achieve such simplicity in attainment as that of Stradivari. Only the very high can afford to walk in such a lowly path of humble effort. Only the children of the gods may be so innocently human and so divinely commonplace.

Some persons insist that Antonio did not enter Nicolo Amati's workshop until he was eighteen, but the general consensus of belief points to his having been apprenticed to the veteran when he was not more than fourteen. "There in the workshop," says Olga Racster, "he worked side by side with the more sober Andrea Guarnieri."

As we have indicated in an earlier chapter, his work was so brilliant that long before he was free from his apprenticeship he was making so-called "Amati Violins," which were sold in

Cremona and elsewhere under the name of the Maestro. He was a tall, earnest, one-ideaed lad, very natural and simple, and absolutely untiring in his work, and once in a while old Nicolo would stare at him for a time as though puzzled, then shake his head, and turn away muttering something unintelligible.

His fellow-students looked at him and at his work with open wonder. How did he know how to insert purfling and join pieces almost before the Maestro told him? How did he guess the exact balance of steaming ingredients in making a varnish, and why was his instinct so unerring in choosing a bit of wood for sound-post or bridge? Often Antonio would fling half a dozen scraps of pine and maple across the room against the wall, his face set with attention and concentration the while, as, with half-closed eyes, he noted the pitch of each as it struck. At last his lips would light up with a smile and he would run forward searching for the approved fragment. "Listen to this, Maestro! This is the piece you want!"

When Antonio was seventeen he fell in love. That in itself was quite harmless and not at all unusual; even the fact that it was for a woman ten years older than himself, and a widow into

the bargain, only proves Antonio to have in no way escaped the sentimental traditions of eighteen-year-old masculinity. But what did place his romance on a rather peculiar footing was that he was not satisfied to adore the lady from afar, and break his heart over her from a safe distance, but was firmly determined to marry her.

Francesca Capra was a beautiful woman, still young, and with the added charm of a tragic story to render her doubly irresistible in male eyes. She was the daughter of Francesca Ferabosca, — sometimes spelled Ferraboschi, — and at twenty-three had married Giovanna Giocomo Capra, with whom she lived contentedly enough for two years, and to whom she bore one baby girl, — Susanna. In 1664 Capra was assassinated by an arquebus ball while walking in the Piazza Santa Legata. The story is a long one, and not any too lucid, after its hundred garbled accounts. Francesca went home to the Ferabosca roof-tree with her baby, and there lived, a very pathetic and inconsolable widow, until the tall lad from Maestro Amati's workshop chanced to look up toward her balcony as he passed by, and then stopped to speak to tiny Susanna crowing in the sun.

The love affair was one of those swift, sum-

mer fostered things, that fly like flames through the most humdrum lives. It required but few magical nights under the proverbially intoxicating moon of Italy, but half a dozen eager questions and hurried answers, but a fragment of courtship, a glimmer of hope, a swift brush of determination, and the thing was done.

Francesca, wide-eyed at the notion of giving up her rôle of weeping young Madonna, found herself unaccountably wooed off her feet. Her widow's veil was ruthlessly torn off, her soft breast was loaded with smiling flowers, she was ordered to sing love songs again, and learn the wisdom of gaiety from her baby. In short, young Stradivari conquered unconditionally, and lost not the slightest time in carrying off his conquest.

He was less than eighteen when on July 4, 1667, the good Padre Pietro Guallo, parish priest of the "Collegiate and Renowned Church of Santa Agata in Cremona"—so runs the register—married this curiously assorted but radiantly happy couple. Francesca wore the brightest and richest gown she could buy in the town,—and her purse left her quite free to choose what she liked, too,—and Susanna laughed all through the ceremony.

It was not very long before Susanna had a small stepsister, Giulia, born during the winter following that most ill-advised but immensely successful wedding at St. Agatha's. In all, Stradivari and Francesca had six children, — one of whom, the first boy, died in babyhood. His name was Francesco, after his mother, and Stradivari insisted on calling the next boy by the same name, as a matter of sentiment.

Meanwhile Stradivari still worked with his master, Amati, and still made no attempt to win any personal fame. He finished many of Nicolo's instruments as he had been wont to do as a mere boy in the workshop, and allowed very few violins to go out into the world bearing his own signature. These few specimens of an obscure and little covered period in Stradivari's life of production are very rare, and have only been seen by a limited number of persons, though they are known to exist.

In 1679 the faithful follower and student had his reward. Nicolo Amati retired from all active participation in the work of fiddle-making, and at his wish Stradivari took his place, not only carrying out the ambitions and undertakings of the veteran on a scale which would have been impossible even to a Nicolo Amati, but estab-

lishing his own reputation and standard on a new and incomparable basis.

His wife's money and what he himself was able to save during the very first year of his independent work enabled him to buy a house, No. 1 Piazza San Domenico. It had three floors and ample cellars, a big courtyard at the back, and on the top of the house a sort of covered terrace, full of sun and air, which the Cremonese called the "Seccadoni," or drying-place, and which the townswomen were accustomed to use for the drying of linen after the wash, as well as for the drying and preparing of herbs and fruits. This primitive sort of solarium Stradivari promptly annexed as his workroom, and filled with tools, cabinets, tables, shelves, chests, and a boiling apparatus.

Here, arrayed in his historic garb, — a white leather apron, and a white cap made of linen in summer and of wool in winter, — he spent long, peaceful days, with the wind blowing in, clean and cool, above the defilement of cities; straight as sunlight it shot from the blue mountains just over the way. Here he made his first wonderful fiddles, growing gaunter, and longer, and leaner year by year, but never tired, never sad, and never losing the wholesome human sunniness that

had brought summer into Francesca's chilled heart, and that made his violins sing not only like birds, but like living things with souls.

People rarely saw him at work, for he loved to be undisturbed. It was no jealousy of genius that made him shut the doors of his Seccadoni. No man was ever far from the pettiness of greatness. Even his formula for varnish was scribbled on the fly-leaf of the family Bible! He never guarded it with any great care, though after his death the Stradivari family fell upon it and refused to let anyone that was unblessed by their sacred name even glance at it.

In 1698 Francesca died, after thirty years of very complete happiness. Stradivari seemed almost too anxious that she should have the most impressive burial possible, and is said to have paid out more than twenty pounds for the purpose, which was considered lavish for those days, and amazingly so for him, — for he had not the most open-handed reputation in Cremona. Among the items on the bill for funeral expenses we find fees paid to fourteen priests and choir-boys, over one hundred fathers of different denominations; also the "Velvet and Gold Pall of the Cathedral"; also "Grave-diggers with Capes"; also the "Big Bell," the bells

of St. Matteo and St. Domenico, and "two little bells in the Cathedral."

From this bill Stradivari, seriously counting the items, while Giulia and Caterina, his daughters, were clearing away flowers and preparing supper, carefully deducted eight lire, which he considered exorbitant! No wonder he saved money so fast that the Cremonese townsfolk had a saying, "Ricco come Stradivari (As rich as Stradivari)."

His children were devoted to him, especially Caterina, who, like Caterina Guarnieri and the Tyrolese wife of Giuseppe del Gesù, helped extensively in the workshop. Not the least loyal and loving member of his family was Susanna Capra, his stepdaughter, whom he had legally adopted. She was not quite fourteen years younger than himself, and they were the best of friends and comrades, even after her marriage to Francesco Luca.

In less than a year the master, having satisfied his conscience by according poor Francesca the most splendid obsequies and a number of mourning months, made a second marriage, almost as sudden and unsuitable as the first, and just as unreasonably successful. He was then forty-nine years old, and he married Antonia Zambelli, who

was almost twenty years younger. She was a very pretty, fresh girl, and Stradivari married on the twenty-fourth of August, having a liking for midsummer weddings. The ceremony took place at the Church of San Donato, and this time it was the bridegroom instead of the bride who left the altar with the elixir of youth sparkling in his eyes and pulsing in his breast. Antonia was as good as she was pretty, — less romantic and passionate, perhaps, than the pathetic young widow whose melancholy veil and melancholy meditations he had destroyed with equal ardour, — but a capable little housewife, who adored him humbly and bore him five children in rapid succession.

In all Stradivari had, by his two wives, eleven children, none of whom achieved any particular distinction. One sympathises with the French biographer, who gave up trying to write the life of Stradivari, declaring that it was all summed up in three words, "Work and children!"

By this time Stradivari's name was known to all the artistic world of his day. Kings and princes sent to the modest house on the Piazza San Domenico commanding violins. The master had more orders than he could fill, though he worked incessantly. James II of England, the King of Spain, the Grand Duke of Florence, and

many other great persons wanted his famous fiddles.

In 1684 he made a "Viola da Gamba Alla Gobba (Hunchbacked Viol)" for the Contessa Cristina Visconti. This was a viol with the upper part of the back sloped in a curious position. It is not stated in the records why the Contessa Cristina wanted this weird instrument, or why Stradivari made it for her if she did.

One thing he was unchanging and unswerving in, — the necessity that what he undertook should be properly and fittingly finished, irrespective of time, tide, and the haste of all the crowned heads of the universe.

"Why have I not received my violin?" some irate and impatient noble would demand by special messenger.

"Because, your worship, it is not finished," would respond the white-capped, white-aproned King of Violins, in pure seriousness and simplicity of soul.

Once he wrote tranquilly to a particularly irritable potentate: "I would have sent the violin to your highness, but saw no safe method of delivering it. I have now induced the barefooted father, San Manro, to take it to you."

The King of Spain, at the end of what little

patience the gods had blessed him with, sent a great noble of his court, accompanied by servants and men at arms, to Cremona, with a peremptory letter and the eighteenth century Italian equivalent for "Wait for an answer."

The grandee stayed there three weeks.

When he came back with the violin he said that Messer Stradivari had listened to him quietly when he declared that his royal master desired him to wait until the violin was ready to carry back. "Wait then," he remarked, and went on with his work. So he had waited. And it had been three weeks.

Some of the most famous of Stradivari's violins are known on the market under the following names:

1690 The "Tuscan Strad." Made for the Grand Duke of Tuscany. After passing through many hands it finally reached those of Mr. Hill in London. The ornamentation and the work on the scroll are particularly fine, — rather more ornate than most of the master's work. Joachim coveted this violin for years.

1711 The "Parke."

1712 The "Viotti."

1713 The "Boissièr," once belonging to Sarasate.

1714 The "Dolphin." It gained its name from its peculiar iridescent varnish, and belonged for years to Sarasate's master, Alard.

1715 The "Gillot," belonging to Mr. Gillot.

1715 The "Alard," in possession of Baron Knoop.

1715 Three violins belonging to Joachim.

1716 The "Cesoli." It once belonged to Felix, then to Arlot, and finally to Count Cesole.

1717 The "Sasseron."

1718 The "Maurin."

Besides these there are the three most celebrated instruments of all: The "Rode" (1722), the "Messie," and the "Pucelle."

The "Rode" is ornamented in the most delicately elaborate manner, the ribs outlined with black and the purfling inlaid with ivory and mother of pearl. There are very few instruments in existence which for sheer beauty can touch the "Rode." Its market value has risen in the last few years from one hundred and sixty pounds to twelve thousand pounds! The usual price for "Strads" is five hundred pounds, or twenty-five hundred dollars.

The "Messie" or "Messiale" (1716) has a long and romantic history. It was silent for one hundred and forty-seven years, and when it was

found in the room of the vagabond Luigi Tarisio, after his death, it had never been touched by a bow. Tarisio was a strange, quaint character, who possessed nothing in the world but violins, — most of which he had stolen or gotten through some nefarious scheme. We owe him some of the rarest fiddles ever put on the market.

The "Pucelle" was made in 1709, and is now in the possession of the family of Glandey. It is valued at nine hundred pounds. The naïve historian in chronicling the works of Stradivari gives this delicious explanation: "The violin is called the 'Pucelle' — the Maid — *because of its perfect state of preservation!*"

Stradivari worked on, year by year, contented to work, contented with each sun that rose and each dusk that stole darkly down the Piazza to the accompaniment of tinkling mandolins and lutes. He taught musical lads and men such essentials of his craft as could be taught, and loved even that part of his appointed work. Nothing really disturbed his quiet golden days.

When in 1702 the city was taken by Marshal Villeroy, of the Imperialist party, and retaken by Prince Eugéne, and then retaken a third time by the French, Stradivari raised his head from the willow branches fresh cut on the banks of the

River Po — he always used this willow-wood for the inner framework, the blocks and lining, of his violins — and said, "There seem to be several battles this year." Then he went on working.

He smiled indulgently on gossip, — did not resent particularly the "Ricco come Stradivari," though he knew that with eleven children it was bound to be more ironic than truthful, and he took small interest in the report that the sweetness of his tone was caused by his varnishing the inside of his instrument with a varnish made from the wax of honeybees. He neither admitted things nor denied them. Even if he had lived in an age of newspapers, he would never have been induced to rush into print.

In March, 1737, his wife Antonia died. Her loss grieved the master, but at his age death means no great parting after all.

"It is not for long," he told her.

And nine months later, in December, he followed her.

The parish record of his death in the register of San Matteo is as follows :

"In the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and thirty-seven, on the nineteenth day of the month of December, Signor Antonio Stradivari, a widower aged about ninety-five years, having

died yesterday, fortified by the Holy Sacraments, and comforted by prayers for his soul until the moment he expired, I, Domenico Antonio Stancari, Parish Priest of this Church of San Matteo, have escorted this day his corpse with funeral pomp to the Church of the Very Reverend Fathers of San Domenico in Cremona, where he was buried."

Years afterward, when they really began to appreciate something of the greatness of the simple man who had lived among them for nearly a century, the Cremonese folk fastened a tablet on the house which had been built on the site of his old home:

"Here Stood the House
in which
Antonio Stradivari
Brought the Violin to its Highest Perfection,
and Left to Cremona
an Imperishable Name as a
Master of His Craft."

What a splendid figure he is, to be sure, this aged artist, this venerable artisan, this ninety-five-year-old man of work! Other men try to hide their age; Stradivari was childishly proud of his. On his priceless labels he used to put, after the immortal "Antonius Stradivarius Cremonensis" his age, — eighty, or eighty-five, or ninety, — as much as to say "This is what the Veteran of Veterans can do!"

George Eliot paid him fine tribute when she wrote of Naldo, the painter, that he was one

> "Knowing all tricks of style at thirty-one,
> And weary of them; while Antonio
> At sixty-nine wrought placidly his best."

She made a rarely strong and beautiful picture of the master, also, in her description of him as

> "That plain, white aproned man, who stood at work,
> Patient and accurate, full four-score years;
> Cherished his sight and touch by temperance,
> And, since keen sense is love of perfectness,
> Made perfect violins, — the needed paths
> For inspiration and high mastery."

Where they buried him there is now no tomb to which passionate violin lovers may make pilgrimages, or students of history go to dream and meditate. But remembering his warm kindliness and human simplicity, we cannot resent the fact that his resting-place should be marked by a public garden, where children play all day and the sun shines and the birds sing. On a vase in the heart of it is just this little inscription:

> "HERE, WHERE FORMERLY STOOD THE CONVENT AND
> CHURCH OF THE DOMENICAN INQUISITORS,
> THE TOWN COUNCIL
> HAVE PROVIDED
> A PLEASANT PROSPECT OF
> TREES AND FLOWERS."

The One Perfect Thing

"Years ago (it is said) there lived in Bremen a watch-maker, whose fame was universal, for his watches were the most perfect in the world. No one could discover the secret of his pre-eminence. At last he sickened and died, and the secret was revealed, for his watches stopped one by one; he had wrought a little of his own soul into each time-piece, and when he died — they died also!

"So it is with the Fiddle-Maker; his whole soul is put into his work — but his work does not die with him, it lives, divinely sweet, till sheer old age crumbles it away, till long after his grandchildren's grandchildren have lived out their allotted three-score years and ten, in blissful ignorance of their ancestor who 'made fiddles.'"

Edward Heron-Allen.

XIX. — The One Perfect Thing

It was once stated by a very wise and learned man: "There are only three perfect things in the world, — the bow and arrow, the boomerang, and the violin"; only three things, the wise man proceeded to explain, upon which no improvement could be made, and for which no further stage of progressive development would be possible. He contended — this wise man — that, among all the mechanical contrivances of the world, all the artistic creations and utilitarian inventions, all the flower and fruit of ages of research and evolution, these three things alone had reached their completed form, and could not, by any twist of scientist's or artisan's brains, by any effort after ingenious betterment, be pushed one inch farther on the pathway of evolution.

Now to this wise man there came yet another wise man, who pointed out that the bow and arrow was not a perfect thing, since it could be made to-day in steel, or other flexible metals, and gain threefold in power and efficacy.

"That is true," said the first wise man, "but though you may alter the materials, the form

would remain the same. The shape, operation, and principle of the bow and arrow are perfect, so my point stays unchanged."

Nevertheless, since so warm a controversy arose from this, we will follow the legal fashion of refusing evidence that is not "proved beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt" and discard the bow and arrow from our perfect trio. Remains to us the boomerang and the violin.

Now the boomerang, as a perfect scientific, mechanical, and utilitarian demonstration of extraordinary natural phenomenon, — which is one way of saying natural law, — is unexceptionable and incomparable. But to our mind, though we advance the theory in all humbleness, perfection implies more than mere practical completeness, means something better than the successful exposition of some principle of gravity, or air-resistance, or other scientific force. It seems, to us, to demand some element of beauty, some breath of the spirit as well as the head, something that the artist as well as the artisan can acclaim as "perfect." On this basis of reasoning we intrench ourselves, and timidly, very timidly, even secretly, lest the wise man catch us, eliminate the boomerang.

And now we have the violin, unshouldered by lesser things; now we have our imprisoned spirit of the bright outer spaces, singing through strings and wood; now we have our tree-dryad given a voice, our Heart of Music incarnate and triumphant; now we have the One Perfect Thing.

Haweis, delightful if inaccurate enthusiast, declares that the violin even possesses the peculiar attributes of a human body. He becomes eloquent, this dear, rhapsodic, clerical violomaniac, when he speaks of the sheer physical beauties of the fiddle he loves: "... The grace of the curves, the surface never flat or board-like, but full of a beauty of levels, like the satiny surface of a fine human body! You might almost believe," he pursues, "that a whole system of muscles, a very living organism, lay beneath the back and belly, swelling with undulating grace."

Heron-Allen's fancy, that every violin maker puts part of himself into his work, must be true. So intimate and sweet a connection as exists between the maker and his fiddle must mean no ordinary bond. Such tender labour and unremitting devotion, such exquisite sympathy and unbelievable response in thrilling melody — these

things must constitute, and, paradoxically, be born of, a very oneness of spiritual fibre. They must create, even as they result from, a fine unity and absoluteness of understanding that could only be expressed in the minute language of vibrations. Surely there was never a man who made a great violin who did not feel across his own heart-strings the compelling friction of the bow that played it; no violin, fashioned by a master, but carries in its sensitive wood, its infinitely delicate pegs and catgut, its quivering body and imperious soul, the spiritual essence and heart entity of the man who made it.

Every sort of attempt has been made to improve on the violin. There have even been earthenware violins. M. Choquet played on one once and declared that its tone was "neither powerful nor pleasant." Jules Fleury, under his nom de plume of "Champfleury," wrote a graceful little romance of a china fiddle, called "Le Violon de Faience." There have been violins of copper, of brass, of silver. One made of the latter metal is still exhibited in the British Museum as a curiosity.

One of the queerest of "freak fiddles" was that made by Gavin Wilson, a Scotch shoemaker who lived in Edinburgh. He invented a process

for hardening leather to use in manufacturing artificial legs, and ended by making all sorts of things with it. According to the "Gentlemen's Magazine" (1813), he "made therefrom a German flute and a violin which were not inferior to any constructed of wood" (!). This violin, dated 1776, is still preserved in the Conservatoire de Musique in Paris, but I never heard of anyone playing on it.

Some persons have even made fiddles of papier-mâché. One horror fabricated of this material is in the possession of M. Georges Chanot. It is painted green and gold, and even the little devils weep whenever they happen to pass by.

There have been trumpet violins, pear-shaped violins, glass violins, five-, seven-, and eight-stringed violins. There was also one strange atrocity made of nails set in a circular frame, and played with a bow of coarse, heavily resined black hair. Some of the nails were long and some short, and the chromatic nails (!) were slightly bent. This, however, did not supplant the ordinary violin in public favour, we understand.

As a matter of fact, what are these absurd inventions but the grotesque and extravagant toys that children make for themselves from scraps of wood and wisps of straw? The Perfect Violin

has been made. You cannot create something more perfect than perfection.

The violin, like man, is the fruit of the whole world's evolution. Unlike man, it has reached the highest balance of its supreme equation ; it is fulfilled, completed, perfected. It has no farther to go. Like man, its first voice broke meaninglessly upon the unrecording air, in prehistoric caves and undiscovered islands ; unlike man, its great journey toward its ultimate expression is ended, and its eventual song divinely learned. No stage of its pilgrimage but has left its imprint upon the Heart of Music, even as upon the soul of man remain the records of his slow ascent from primordial nothingness to comparative consciousness. The violin's memory is as long as time. Its evolution has not been a matter of form and model, — of pegs and strings and sound-holes and bass bars, — of thickness nor thinness, of bowing nor plucking, of wood nor varnish, nor size, nor bridges, nor making, nor playing, nor anything else tangible and technical.

Neither has man's evolution been a matter of legal regulations and sartorial changes.

The connoisseur, as a rule, will laugh at this theory ; he will tell you that when Amati slanted

his sound-holes, when Tourte made the perfect bow, when a variety of other important steps in violin history was finally taken, we find the real stages of fiddle development. He may even, it has been known, make queer jokes about the sound-post being a signpost, and the bass bar the basis of tonal endurance; about using the corner blocks to build on, the tuning-pegs to hang music to, and the bridge to cross over to perfection. He is usually an amateur, the connoisseur.

But go to some old maker, — even some quite modern old maker, one who treasures one great Amati, or Guarnerius, or "Strad," — who has no pretensions nor conceit, but who makes good violins, off in some dusty corner of the world. He will talk to you of the violin's soul, a thing bird-like, elusive, known to every builder of fiddles of all time. He loves the beautiful bodies of the instruments, of course, but he recognises something beyond, and bows his head before it. He knows, for one thing, that every violin has to be rested once in a while, — laid away in the dark and quiet, to go to sleep. If a man play on it during this time, it will jangle irritably.

"Not at all unaccountable," says the connois-

seur. "The experts have explained all that. The excessive vibrations of the strings have granulated the wood-cells. That's all."

The old maker looks at him and shakes his head quietly. He knows better.

"It is tired," he says gently, and goes away, leaving the weary instrument upon some remote shelf, to rest and dream.

The primitive chants of the early savages; the measured hymns of the priests of Egypt; the wild songs of Babylon and the dreamy melodies of India; the music of Greece, that praised her heroes; the music of Rome, that debased her citizens; the music of the dark North, that spurred her melancholy barbarians to battle; the music of the South, that pulsed in blood already hot with love and wine — all these old notes and cadences linger still in the Heart of Music. You cannot tell how they have stayed, nor why,—you cannot even know where it is that they still vibrate. Yet in the finished instrument that bears "Stradivarius" upon its glowing wood throbs still the message of the East, the cry of the North, the dream of the South.

It is ineradicable, this old history and old mystery of the fiddle. It is for all time; for of all things made by man the stringed instrument

is almost the most ancient, and it is certainly the wisest.

Who should know man, if not the violin? In its primitive forms it has accompanied every great era in his history, every important stage in his life. It has lulled him to sleep as a baby, under hot Asiatic suns; it has cheered his hours of solitude, watching his flocks through misty days among the hills; it has pleaded for him under passionate stars, when his lips were sealed by the very choking heaviness of desire; it has played him to the magic of his marriage night, and saluted his first-born in a quivering storm of triumphant tenderness; it has softened the harsh places of his old age with melodies that painted the romance and the vigour of dead days; it has lifted pain to dignity and sorrow to a song; it has comforted bereavement and commemorated success. Finally it has played him to his last bed, with as full a sympathy, as brave and exultant a melody, as it played him to his wedding. And, if his deeds were big and his fame fair, it has made his name lovely with immortal harmonies.

So, the friend and consoler of mankind, the inspiration, mouthpiece, and interpreter of his highest moments, the wisest, tenderest, ancientest, youngest of the children of the Musical Gods,

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